



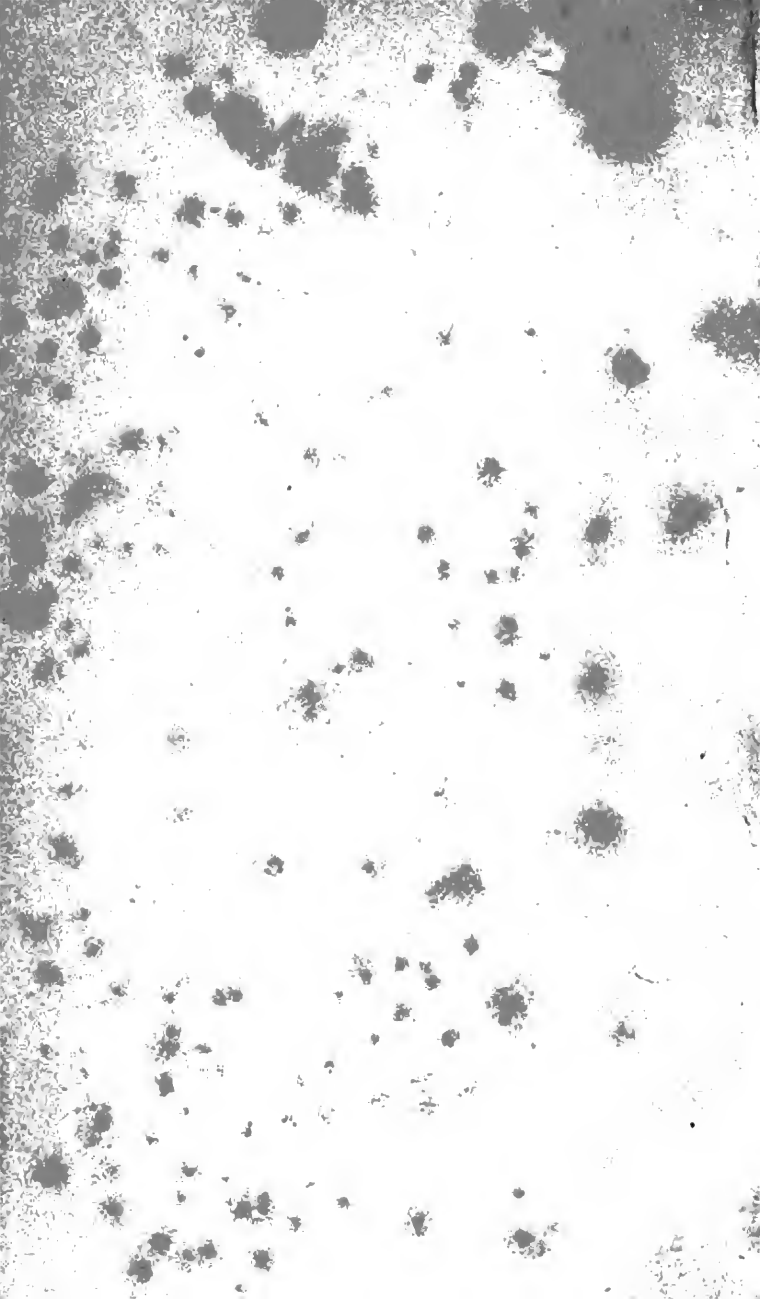
enth Century. Chart showing path of  
avigators with map of landings. 8vo, cloth.  
oston. 1839. 4.50



*EX LIBRIS*

*WILFRED HAROLD MUNRO*







ARM  
56537 n

April 21 188

309

THE

# Northmen in New England,

OR

## A M E R I C A

IN

### THE TENTH CENTURY.

---

BY

JOSHUA TOULMIN SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "PROGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY AMONG THE ANCIENTS;" "COMPARATIVE VIEW OF ANCIENT HISTORY, WITH EXPLANATION OF CHRONOLOGICAL ERAS," ETC.

---

"Let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time."  
*Hamlet.*

345960  
26. 1. 38.

BOSTON:

HILLIARD, GRAY, & CO.

1839.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1839,  
BY HILLIARD, GRAY & CO.  
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

---

PRINTED BY WILLIAM A. HALL & CO.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

EDWARD EVERETT,

The following illustrations of a subject  
to which his attention has been recently  
directed are respectfully dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E .

---

THE object of the following pages is twofold. It is, first, to present the public with accurate accounts of the discovery of, and early voyages to, and settlements in, the Western Hemisphere, and continent of North America, by Europeans. It is, secondly, to prove that those accounts are authentic.

The honor of being the first European who trod the shores of the new world has long been assigned to CHRISTOVAL COLON, commonly called CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. In ignorance of the previous discovery and exploration of the same land by other parties, in a much more remote period, the assignment of this honor to him might appear just. When, however, it is made known that these discoveries were in fact made at a much earlier period, and in a much more complete manner, by the inhabitants of a distinct and remote

nation, that honor which has surrounded his name should be transferred to them. Columbus may have touched upon America in the fifteenth century, but the NORTHMEN, without any of the advantages of advanced science which he possessed, discovered and explored it in the tenth.\*

If, then, the discoveries and voyages of Columbus have ever been esteemed objects of interest and importance, the discoveries and voyages of the Northmen, five centuries previously, should certainly be esteemed of at least equal interest and importance. That interest should be increased by the fact that the latter discovered and explored the very same shores where now a race, of Anglo-Saxon blood has fixed its habitation, and made once savage and barbarous America assume an important station in the history of the world.

NEW ENGLAND was, next to Greenland, the portion of this continent which the Northmen especially explored; in New England for a time they dwelt; in New England one, at least, of their race was born, — the first of European blood that ever saw the light upon these shores; in New England the bones of more than one of these bold

---

\* Particular attention is requested to Note A, on this subject, at the end of the volume.

navigators and explorers were committed to the earth, where they even now lie mouldering.

NEW ENGLAND may be said to have become *classic ground*, since the discoveries of the Northmen have become generally known. To all who take interest in the history of the world, in the history of human enterprise, in the history of geographical science, in the history of the advance of nations and of the human mind, these discoveries must be interesting. The circumstances under which they were made should make them of an interest surpassing that attending the discoveries of any modern navigator, — Columbus himself, and Cabot, not excepted.

Certainly, to the present inhabitants of the regions thus explored, the interest must be still greater than to the rest of the civilized world.

The original records of these discoveries have recently been published by the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians at Copenhagen. The volume, however, in which they are contained (*Antiquitates Americanæ*) is one which, from its price, and the circumstance of its being in foreign languages, (ancient Icelandic, Danish, and Latin,) must be inaccessible to the majority of readers. The object of this work is, then, to make the whole subject familiar to all; to present the narra-

tives of these discoveries, as contained in the volume mentioned, with such historical and other illustrations as would tend to elucidate the subject, and add to its interest; and to present any additional facts to which the author had access, bearing upon the subject.

As these documents, though long before the learned world, have only recently been at all generally known to exist, it was desirable to adduce proof of their genuineness and authenticity, and to meet every objection which has been or may be made to them, at the same time that they were thus made public. This the author has accordingly attempted in the following pages. It seemed the more desirable to do this here, inasmuch as it has been barely touched upon in the *Antiquitates Americanæ*. A mode of argument has, in pursuance of this design, been purposely adopted which is most suited to induce general conviction. Another might have been adopted, but one less suited and less interesting to the general reader. The argument is drawn chiefly from a source now generally acknowledged to be the most conclusive, namely, the *internal evidence*, — a mode of argument so successfully adopted in PALEY'S *Horæ Paulinæ*, and which is generally found to be attractive as well as conclusive.



In order to present the subject under these different aspects, — the detail of facts, and the proof of their authenticity, — in the most pleasing mode, the author has thrown the whole into the form of *dramatic dialogue*. Room is thus afforded for varying the interest, and for different episodical allusions; while a familiarity of style is admitted which would have otherwise been out of place, but which is useful in the discussion of such a subject. Different characters are presented, sustaining different parts; and the unities of time, place, and character have been attempted to be preserved. The scene is laid in Newport, Rhode Island, for reasons which will appear obvious upon perusal.

One remark must be added. In accordance with the very commendable practice now generally adopted by the best writers, all the names mentioned are given in their actual and original forms, and not in the barbarous forms in which they usually appear. The utility of this practice will be self-evident, since the perverted forms in common use only serve to obstruct ease of research. Who, for example, in perusing ancient or original records, and meeting with the names *Colon*, *Svend*, or *Knud*, would imagine that he was reading of the individuals of whom he had

been accustomed to hear as *Columbus*, *Sweno*, and *Canute*? Though, at first, the correct forms may sound harsh, the ear will soon become accustomed to them, and they will appear as euphonious as the corrupted and unauthorized forms. It may be observed that the *final* *r* in the Norman names has been omitted, as being a consonantal sound, incapable of being uttered in its place, and only giving, therefore, an unnecessary harshness to the appearance of these names.

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Statement of Subject. — Not a recent Speculation, but a Fact long known and published. — How shown to be true. — Probability of its truth. — Proof of actual Authenticity of Documents, and Truth of Narrations. — External Evidence: — Internal Evidence. — Whether any Knowledge of a Western Continent among Ancient Greeks and Romans. — Utility of a Knowledge of this Subject, . . . . . 1

## CHAPTER II.

Discovery of *Iceland* by NADDODD, (A. D. 861.) — Discovery of *America (in Greenland)* by EIREK the RED, (982.) — Expeditions to the Northern Regions. — Discovery of the more southern regions of *America* by BIARNI HERIULFSON, (985.) — Introduction of Christianity into Greenland by LEIF EIREKSON, (999.) — Expedition of LEIF EIREKSON to *Vinland*, and residence there, (1000.) — Expedition of THORVALD EIREKSON to *Vinland*, (1002.) — Residence and death there, (1004.) — Expedition of THORSTEIN EIREKSON, (1005.) — Story of GUDRID. — Death of THORSTEIN, (1005.) — Return of GUDRID, (1006,) . . . . . 49

## CHAPTER III.

Arrival of THORFINN KARLSEFNI in *Greenland*, (A. D. 1006.) — Marriage with GUDRID, (1006-7.) — Expedition to *Vinland*, (1007.) — Arrival at *Kialarness*, (Cape Cod.) — Winters (1007-8) in *Straumfjord*, (Buzzard's Bay.) — SNORRI THOR-

FINN SON born there, (1007.) — Thorfinn passes on to *Hóp*, (Rhode Island,) (1008.) — Winters there, (1008-9.) — Indian Traditions and names. — Thorfinn encounters the Natives, (1009.) — Sails up the river (to Providence.) — Returns to *Straumfiord*, (1009.) — Expedition along the Eastern Coast, (1009.) — Winters at *Straumfiord*, (1009-10.) — Returns to Greenland, (1010.) — Two Natives taken on way home. — Destruction of BIARNI GRIMOLFSON. — Thorfinn settles at *Glaumba*, in Iceland, : . . . . . 152

## CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT BALLAD in which VINLAND is mentioned. — Latest recorded Visits to the Continent of America by the Northmen. — Continued Intercourse with those regions. — Permanent Colonies established by the Northmen in the Western Hemisphere, . . . . . : . . . . . 212

## CHAPTER V.

IRISH in America. — NORTHMEN in HUITRAMANNALAND, (Southern States of United States.) — ARI MARSON, (A. D. 983.) — History of BIORN ASBRANDSON. — Voyage of GUDLEIF GUDLAUGSON, . . . . . 247

## CHAPTER VI.

Remains of Northmen existing in America. — Buildings and Inscriptions in Greenland, and in New England. — Body found at Fall River, . . . . . 293

## APPENDIX.

Note A, — On the Comparative Merits of the Northmen and Columbus, . . . . . 329

Chart of the World, according to Icelandic Manuscripts of the thirteenth century, . . . . . 359

Note B, — On the traditional Records of the Northern Nations, . . . . . 361

THE  
N O R T H M E N  
IN  
NEW ENGLAND.

---

CHAPTER I.

Statement of Subject.—Not a recent Speculation, but a Fact long known and published.—How shown to be true.—Probability of its truth.—Proof of actual Authenticity of Documents, and Truth of Narrations.—External Evidence.—Internal Evidence.—Whether any Knowledge of a Western Continent among Ancient Greeks and Romans.—Utility of a Knowledge of this Subject.

WHAT! exclaimed the doctor; do you pretend to tell me that Columbus was not the discoverer of America?

Undoubtedly, was the reply; I pretend to tell you that America was known to Europeans at least five hundred years before the time of Columbus's, or, more properly, Colon's alleged discovery.

The expression of Dr. Dubital's countenance, during this reply, was one of mingled surprise and incredulity. Being a man of travel, and possessing no small idea of the superiority of his own knowledge and opinion over that of all his neighbors, he was extremely unwilling, at any time, to discover, or even to have it hinted, that there was

“any thing in heaven or earth which was not dreamed of in his philosophy.”

After a moment's silence, he rejoined :— You do not speak seriously, Mr. Norset.

In faith, but I do. Most soberly and seriously, I mean to announce to you the fact, of which, in truth, I am surprised that you should have hitherto been unaware, that America was discovered by the NORTHMEN, at least five centuries before the date of Colon's voyage to this country.

Unaware! yes, indeed, I was unaware of such a *fact*, as you are pleased to call it. A man can certainly never know all the strange theories and new-fangled notions in which some folks choose to wander now-a-days.

No theory, my dear doctor, nor new-fangled notion either; as I shall be able, very satisfactorily, to show you.

Do you then profess to assert,—to come plainly to the point,—do you profess to assert that this town of Newport and State of Rhode Island, were ever visited by Europeans before the time of Columbus, or Colon,\* if you will?

There, doctor, you go a little too far. I find no mention made of Newport, or Rhode Island either, in the travels of Colon. A man may easily visit America, without ever seeing Rhode Island; but, since you have thus put your question, I will answer, that I do pretend to assert, that, by a somewhat singular coincidence, perhaps, the very spot whereon chance has thrown you and me together, and whereon the town of Newport now

---

\* The name *Colon* is employed throughout this volume, instead of its Latinized corruption, *Columbus*, not from any caprice, but simply because it is the correct name, and *Columbus* is merely a barbarous perversion.

stands, was actually visited by the Northmen, and that the country in its immediate vicinity was especially well known to them five centuries anterior to the voyages of Colon.

Well, well, said the doctor, his expression of incredulity and wonder increasing at every word of this reply ; I don't know what we shall hear next. But you know it's nonsense ; we all know that Colon discovered America ; and I don't see why any one should doubt the truth of his discoveries, or want to rob him of the credit of them, at this time of day.\*

Rob him of the credit of them ! doctor ; — no one wants to rob him of any credit that belongs to him. It is a mere question of fact ; we can't admit the credit system here.

Question of fact, indeed ! Yes, I know it is a question of fact ; and every body knows the fact to be, that Colon discovered America in 1492, and that his was the first European foot that ever touched this soil.

Doctor, you must excuse me ; but just let me ask you how you know all this ?

Know it ! why, every one knows it ; history tells us so, to be sure.

Good ; — pray what history tells you so ?

Why, the History of America, and the History of Spain, and, — and, — surely, Mr. Norset, you don't mean seriously to doubt what every body knows.

Certainly I don't mean to doubt what every body knows, provided, always, that it be true ; but I must most seriously declare to you, doctor, that, by precisely the same means that you say you know that COLON dis-

---

\* Particular attention is requested to the note A, at the end of the volume, in which the comparative merit of Colon and of the Northmen is discussed.

covered America in 1492, I say that I know that **BIARNI HERIULFSON** discovered America in 985.

Biarni Heriulfson! 985! pray, sir, where did you learn all this?

Why, doctor! I am surprised you should ask such a question. History tells us so, to be sure.

Some strange history, that is certain. I never heard of Biarni Heriulfson before.

Well, doctor, you must pardon me, but it is barely possible that you may never have heard of Biarni Heriulfson before, and that he yet may have existed. I fear we should never get on very fast, if every man were to refuse to believe every thing that he had not known before.

Be good enough to inform me who this Biarni Heriulfson was, then. I certainly shall be glad to hear something about the man who is to lay poor Colon on the shelf.

You quite lament over Colon's fading laurels, doctor; I would recommend you to compose a dirge upon the occasion. As to Biarni Heriulfson, it would be too long a story to tell you, just now; and, besides, what would be the use of my giving you a history, unless you believed the sources of my information to be authentic.

Ah! to be sure, that's very true. You have, most probably, saved me the time and trouble of listening to his history, for it will be somewhat difficult to prove its authenticity, I think.

Not quite so difficult as you imagine, perhaps. Suppose we attempt the point.

With all my heart.

Well, then, suppose —

No supposition, I beg, sir; pray confine yourself to



facts. I said it was some strange theory, and methinks I was not far wrong, for you begin by a *supposition*.

Not so fast, doctor. Pray don't jump to quite so hasty a conclusion. Every proposition in Euclid is founded, in truth, upon a *supposition*. Certain points in a *supposed* case are proved, and then compared with the points of the particular case in the proposition. And so it must be done, more or less, in almost every argument. I beg, therefore, that you will allow me to proceed with my supposition. I assure you I will wander into no theoretic ground.

Let us hear your supposition, then, said the doctor, with something like a sneer.

Since the notion of a supposition appears to trouble you so much, doctor, I will even take a fact, though it will have precisely the same effect upon the argument. Doubtless you have heard of the previously unknown work of Epicurus, which has been recently published?

His work, "De Naturâ," you mean: certainly I have. What has Epicurus, or his works, to do with Biarni Heriulfson, or any other discoverer of America?

Just this much:—neither you, nor any body else, was aware that the work of Epicurus was in existence, or what were its contents; and yet, when, after having lain under the ashes of Vesuvius for upwards of seventeen long centuries, it is at length brought to light, neither you, nor any one else, hesitates to receive it as authentic.\* It is very possible, then, that other manuscripts, of less antiquity, may have lain hidden for a length of

---

\* This curious and interesting work was published in 1818, having been previously, *for the first time*, published in 1809, under the following title: "Epicurei Fragmenta Librorum II. et XII. DE NATURA, in Voluminibus Papyraceis ex Herculano erutis reperta. Lipsiæ, 1818."

time, owing to various circumstances, and may now, for the first time, be brought to light, without any possible impeachment of their authenticity.

That sounds somewhat plausible, perhaps ; but it does not do much towards proving your point. I want to know how it is that this history that you talk about has remained so long hidden and unknown.

Nay, doctor, you must pardon me ; I never said that it had lain hidden and unknown thus long. It was only yourself who stated that you had never heard of Biarni Heriulfson and of these discoveries.

What then ? do you mean to say that they have not lain hidden, — that they have been generally known ?

I mean to say that they have not lain hidden. Whether they have been generally known or not is another question. It is not the fault of the histories, if, being published, they have not been read. I could name to you many printed books, — books which have been long printed, some of them upwards of two centuries, — in which the fact of America having been discovered long anterior to the voyages of Colon is mentioned. I certainly am surprised that none of these have ever fallen in your way.

No wonder at all, sir. They are evidently some obscure works. You mentioned that they had not been much read.

Excuse me ; I said it was not the fault of the books, if people would not read them ; which I said, because you stated that you had never read them. Do you consider the name of Torfæus \* obscure, or that of Wormius,

---

\* Torfæus's *Grænlandia Antiqua*, Hafniæ, 1706, and *Historia Vinlandiæ antiqua, seu partis America Septentrionalis*, Hafniæ, 1705, &c. Wormius published at OXFORD in 1716, a Latin translation of an ancient Icelandic authentic work, in which Vinland is noticed. Mention will be made of Adam of Bremen in a subsequent page.

or of Adam of Bremen ; or, more recently, is the name of Malte Brun especially obscure, or even that of Pinkerton ? These are some among many who have mentioned these discoveries.

Their allusions, then, are only indefinite and vague, and require some theory like yours to make them have any meaning.

Nay, how could they all have got their indefinite and vague notions ? You might say this of a passage in some single ancient manuscript, perhaps, but not of a statement successively made in several modern works. You shall judge of their vagueness from the language of Pinkerton, which I copied out the other day on account

Malte Brun and Pinkerton are too well known to need any reference to their works. It is proper that mention should be here made of the allusions to this subject in *Wheaton's* "History of the Northmen." The author of that work alludes to the discovery of Vinland, &c. and gives a meagre outline, though somewhat more fully than Pinkerton, as quoted, of the expedition thither. He is also more correct in his localities than Malte Brun and Pinkerton. He does not, however, give the full particulars connected with the subject, nor, indeed, any of the details necessary to determining the *internal evidence*. *Henderson* in his "Journal of a Residence in Iceland," alludes to the same facts, (see American edition, p. 16,) though very briefly. He uses the following language, "The fact that America also was first discovered by the Icelanders, though less generally known, is perfectly well authenticated by the northern historians." Like *Wheaton*, he also names *Biarni Heriulfson* as the discoverer, although, like him also, he gives the wrong date to the transaction. All these minute points, as to the differences in dates, &c. given by different authors, might be easily explained, could a lengthened disquisition on the subject be here given. It would be out of place, however ; and the narratives given in this volume are too clear and precise ; and their authenticity and truth too well proved, to render any such disquisitions necessary. These allusions are only made to show how idle is the charge, so often ignorantly made, that the idea of the discovery of America by the Northmen is a *new-fangled* theory and notion.

of its subject, and believe I have got in my pocket-book. Speaking of the discovery of America, he says, "The first discovery of America is generally ascribed to Christoval Colon, or, as commonly called, from the first Latin writings on the subject, Christopher Columbus. But, as it is now universally admitted that Greenland forms a part of America, the discovery must of course be traced to the first visitation of Greenland by the Norwegians, in the year 982, which was followed, in the year 1003, by the discovery of Vinland, which seems to have been a part of Labrador, or of Newfoundland. The colony in Vinland was soon destroyed by intestine divisions; but that in Greenland continued to flourish till maritime intercourse was impeded by the encroaching shoals of arctic ice." And a little after, in his table of the early expeditions to America, he adds, "982, Greenland discovered by the Norwegians, who planted a colony. 1003, Vinland, that is, a part of Labrador or Newfoundland, visited by the Norwegians, and a small colony left, which, however, soon perished."\* There is nothing particularly vague here, doctor, methinks; the statements are made as simple *matters of fact*, of which no onne can doubt the truth; and these passages must have been read by some thousands of people, for the edition from which

---

\* Pinkerton's *Modern Geography*, 3d edition, Vol. II. pp. 208 and 210. In the first volume of the same work, p. 342, occurs the following passage:—"In this reign of Olaf I. Vinland, or Wineland, a more southern part of North America, was discovered by Biarni, and by Leif, son of Eric the Red, A. D. 1003. The little colony settled in Vinland about 1006, perished from intestine divisions. The country was so called from some wild grapes, or berries; and is supposed," &c. &c. Pinkerton had never seen the original authorities, and only drew information from Torfæus. Hence his errors of dates, &c. A note is added to the above passage, to the following effect:—"It is singular enough, that, while the Welsh

I quote them is the *third* through which the work has passed.

Well, and is it VINLAND that you pretend to say that the Northmen called America?

That is the name which they gave to a part of their discoveries in America, though Pinkerton, as also Malte Brun, assign it a wrong situation.

Ah, I thought there would be something wrong about it. Their tale does not quite agree with your theory, then.

Their tale, doctor, if you will have it so, does agree with what you are pleased to call my theory, in the main facts. The situation of Vinland they certainly somewhat misplaced, but the cause of their error is very easily to be explained.\* This error is not very great, after all; and, even if it were greater, still I presume you will not deny that Newfoundland and Labrador are at least as much parts of America as the West Indies are. If, therefore, Colon, visiting the latter, is said to have discovered America, surely the Northmen, visiting the former, may, with more propriety, be said to have been the discoverers of this vast continent.

Upon my word, Mr. Norset, you have a very cunning way of getting out of all the difficulties; but you have not quite escaped them yet. Pray, upon what authority does Pinkerton, or Malte Brun, state these facts?

---

antiquaries deafen us with the imaginary discovery of America by Madoc, A. D. 1170, the Norwegians have been contented with a simple unpretending narration of the facts;”—this *contrast* being obviously strong evidence of the *truth* of the latter accounts. Let it be remembered that Pinkerton's Geography was *published* upwards of TWENTY-SIX YEARS before the work of the Northern Antiquarian Society.

\* See it explained in the following chapter, where allusion is made to the length of the shortest day in Vinland.

Why, doctor, I am free to confess that their authority was not derived from any original authentic documents ; — nay, nay, pray be not in such a hurry to catch at my admission ; — I was going to say that their authority was not derived from any original authentic documents *any more* than your authority, Dr. Dubital, for the belief that Colon alone, and first, discovered America is derived from any original authentic documents.

What, sir, do you mean to say that I have no authority for believing that America was visited by Colon ?

I mean to say no such thing, sir. You have authority, and good authority, but you have no *original* authority. Your authority is derived from sources which, only at third or fourth rate, had any origin in the authentic documents relating to his voyage.

Well, sir, what of that ? you do n't doubt the truth of the accounts on that score, do you ?

Certainly not ; but, by precisely the same token, I shall not allow you to doubt of the truth of the accounts given by Malte Brun and Pinkerton, of the discoveries of the Northmen, because their authority was not derived from reference to the original authentic documents relating those discoveries : their authority was derived from the history of TORFÆUS, who derived his information, however, from these original authentic sources.

You talk a great deal about original authentic sources : pray, sir, what are they ? or, rather, *were* they ? for I suspect you will tell us some plausible story about their former existence, but present loss.

Wrong there, doctor. These ancient, authentic documents not only had a former existence, but have a present existence ; for I am happy to inform you that the parchment manuscripts which contain them are, at this moment, in a state of high preservation.

Really, sir, you seem determined to hedge me in on all sides ; and, of course, as you assert all this, I cannot tell whether it is so or not. It is a marvellous story, altogether. But, supposing—

Nay, nay, doctor ; no suppositions, you know ; we must have facts.

I was only going to say, sir, answered the doctor, hastily, and half angrily, that, supposing all you say, or assume, to be correct, you cannot deny that the alleged facts are *generally* unknown.

Pray do n't be offended, doctor ; I was only giving you a Rowland for your Oliver : you may have all the suppositions that you like with my free consent, especially when, as in this case, your supposition is so true a fact. As to your question, I certainly will not deny that these facts, as to the early discoveries of the Northmen, are generally unknown.

Well, and what is the reason of that, if they be true facts ?

That may seem, at first sight, a difficult question to answer ; but I do not think it really is so. Little attention was paid to literature at the time of these discoveries, and for several centuries later, except in the very land from which the discoverers came, namely, Iceland. Iceland was little known to the rest of the world, and the records of these discoveries lay in the archives of that island. Besides the little intercourse had with Iceland by the rest of Europe, the language in which these records were written was unknown to those portions of Europe in which letters were subsequently chiefly cultivated. When, therefore, Colon made his voyages to America, — all the rest of Europe being ignorant of the former discoveries, and his appearing brilliant, owing to the enterprises which followed them, which enterprises are to be attributed to

the advance of Europe, in his age, so far beyond its condition in the tenth century,—the name of Colon was covered with glory. And you know, doctor, when once a fixed idea has taken possession of men's minds, how hard it is to get rid of it, however false it may be.

A very good explanation, doubtless ; but I think it is strange nobody should have heard of these alleged discoveries before.

I will not allow you to forget that, as I have already shown you, it is not the fact that nobody has heard of them. Though they may not have been generally known, there was every means for their becoming known ; and if they have remained generally unknown, it is from the same cause that I have already mentioned, — that the fixed eye of prejudice can see nothing but its own idea, however contrary to truth that idea may, as in this case, be ; and however clearly the actual truth may, as has here also been the case, be presented to the view. Many works have been published, aye, even, as I have shown you, in our own language, in which the facts have been distinctly stated. You cannot be permitted to shut your eyes to this fact, though all who oppose the authenticity of these discoveries deliberately do so.

Here, then, there is a contradiction : you give reasons for the discoveries *not being known*, and yet assert that they *were known*.

Pray, distinguish the facts, doctor. They were known *in Iceland* ; but I have already given the reasons why, though known there, they should be unknown to the rest of Europe.

Then how came they ever to find their way into the works of Torfæus, or Malte Brun, or Pinkerton ? And, having found their way into their works, how came they to remain any longer generally unknown ?



Both questions are easy to answer. The antiquities of the Northmen were studied by Torfœus, who was himself one of that race, and who had access to the archives of Iceland. He therefore was, like others in Iceland, well acquainted with the facts. He published the account of them in a Latin book, in 1705, which was not, like ancient Icelandic parchments, inaccessible to all. Subsequent candid historians and geographers have learned the facts from him, and recorded them ; — but, long ere his work was published, the idea of Colon's being the first discoverer of America had taken possession of men's minds, and all statements to the contrary have been unheeded and unnoticed, though often made. There has, moreover, been this disadvantage attending the case ; — while all the narrative of Colon's adventures has been long before the world, and well known, merely the bare fact of the discoveries of the Northmen has been usually stated. It is only by the publication, in a familiar form, of the full details of these discoveries, that we can ever expect men's minds in general to be directed towards them, with an interest which will end in a conviction of their truth.

At this moment the door opened, when the doctor, whose brow had become somewhat troubled at the turn the argument had taken, rose from his seat, and, pacing the room, addressed the gentleman who entered as follows :

Well, Mr. Cassall, what think you ? Strange things we hear in these days. I begin to doubt whether you are yourself or not. Here Mr. Norset has been endeavoring to convince me that Colon was not the first discoverer of America.

Ha ! ha ! exclaimed Mr. Norset, you have lost a scene, Mr. Cassall. You should have heard the doctor

bewailing the fate of Christoval Colon. He seems desperately afraid that, if the credit of *Colon* is impaired, the history of the world will soon come to a *full stop*.

Upon my word, Mr. Norset, said the doctor, it is too bad, after trying to take away the credit of Colon, as you have been, to utter now an execrable pun upon his name. You seem to take no little delight in depriving a great man of his honors.

There, doctor, I assure you, you completely mistake me. No one delights more to honor the truly great and good than I ; but I cannot consent to give honor, where, however long it may have been generally conceded, it is not due. As Aristotle said of Plato, I honor Colon much, but I honor truth more. It is no little honor to Colon to have achieved what he did ; but I do maintain that he was not the first discoverer of America. He was the first of *his own age*, at any rate, who navigated the broad Atlantic, and that is no small honor ; and he established a connection between parts of America and Europe, which were before unknown to each other, which is a greater honor still ; but there can be little doubt that he had gained the chief confirmation of his idea of the existence of terra firma in the western ocean, during the visit which he is known to have made, before his western voyage,\* to Iceland. I confess I have been a little amused at your zeal in behalf of Colon's sole credit as discoverer, and at your unwillingness to listen to, or admit, any thing which could possibly affect his credit, whatever foundation there might be for any such allegations. This circumstance may have made my language appear less respectful towards him than my feelings really are.

---

\* Colon visited Iceland in 1477. See note A. at the end of the volume, as to the results of the discoveries of the Northmen, &c.

Well, sir, I am glad you grant that some credit belongs to Colon, however ; but mind, you have done little yet towards convincing me of the truth of your assertions. Pray, Mr. Cassall, have you heard any thing of these discoveries of the Northmen ? And do you give any credit to what, with all deference to Mr. Norset, I must call such absurd nonsense.

Why, yes, I have seen something about them in some of the periodicals ; but I confess I am not greatly inclined, from what I have seen there, to give much credit to the accounts.

I am not surprised to hear you say so, remarked Mr. Norset. It is not very probable that any one, from reading the notices of this subject in the periodicals, the greater portion of them at least,\* would be able to form a very correct judgment on the matter. The reason is obvious. It is very evident, to any person who has seen the original documents, that none of the writers of the reviews and notices in those periodicals have been at the pains to read those original documents, or the illustrations which accompany them. Nor, it must be confessed, is this much to be wondered at ; for, in these degenerate days of duodecimos and diamond editions, most persons turn in horror from the contemplation, much more perusal, of a ponderous quarto, especially when, as in this case, that quarto is in the Latin language.

What is all this about ? exclaimed the doctor : original documents ! — ponderous quarto ! — Latin language ! I thought, sir, you said that Malte Brun and Pinkerton never consulted the original documents, which they

---

\* It is unnecessary here to specify any of the periodicals. It may be merely stated that the *least candid* review, as far as memory serves, is the article in the "*Foreign Quarterly*."

surely would have done, if a sight of them was to be obtained. You said, too, that these documents were in the Northern language, and lying in the archives of Iceland. What, then, is the meaning of your now talking about ponderous quartos, and Latin language? Neither of these is inaccessible to any one who wishes to get at a little knowledge.

Very true, doctor. It does not follow, however, that, because these documents were at one time lying in the archives of Iceland, and in the Northern language, they should lie there forever, and remain forever untranslated. The fact is this: that these original documents have been recently published, with a Danish and Latin translation, together with some valuable literary illustrations — in the shape of extracts from contemporary Icelandic writers, particulars as to the manuscripts of these documents and as to various ancient inscriptions, and brief geographical notices, — under the auspices of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians of Copenhagen.\* So thus is the mystery of the “ponderous quarto” expounded.

And this explains another mystery. I was wondering what could have caused notices of this subject to appear in the periodicals just now, when, by your own acknowledgment, the facts have been, hitherto, *generally* unknown.

You are right for once, doctor; and as you don't seem to be so much terrified at the idea of a Latin

---

\* “ANTIQUITATES AMERICANÆ: sive Scriptores Septentrionales Rerum Ante-Columbianarum in America. Edidit Societas Regia Antiquariorum Septentrionalium. Hafniæ, 1837.” This work will be quoted throughout the following pages by the contraction “*Antiq. Am.*”

quarto as most people, let me advise you to go to that for your information, and not to trust to any reviews.

Why, certainly, the reviewers cannot know much about the matter, if they have not read the book ; but how do you know that they have not read it ?

By reference to the reviews themselves. They all bear evident marks of having been gleaned solely from the synopsis placed at the beginning of the work, and which is, I think unfortunately, in English. Remarks and objections are made, which could not possibly have been made, if each of the documents contained in the volume had been carefully perused, together with the illustrations added by C. C. RAFFN, the learned and careful editor of the volume.

Come, said the doctor, — taking his seat, and drawing his chair closer to the table, some curiosity and interest having evidently at length become excited in his mind, — come, we are perhaps getting to something more tangible at last. Let us hear what this volume contains ; but mind, Mr. Norset, I am not a whit the more convinced of the truth of the facts, because the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians has published a volume. It would not be difficult to fabricate a set of documents, and put them forth in support of a fanciful theory.

Really, Dr. Dubital, I think it is hardly fair or candid in you, or any one else, to allow even the supposition to cross your mind, that a respectable society, like the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians, — a society to which historical literature has been already much indebted, — should fabricate a set of documents in support of any theory ; or should even give the sanction of their name to the publication of any work or documents, the authenticity of which was not beyond a doubt.

Ah ! well, said the doctor, I will not trust to any

Society, that all published under its auspices shall be authentic. If I am to believe any thing about this Northmen story, I must know something more satisfactory than this, in order to prove the authenticity of the documents which contain the information. I certainly shall else set it all down to the score of *theory*.

I must say, remarked Mr. Cassall, that it sounded rather too much like *theory* in the reviews which I have read.

Well, said Mr. Norset, we will leave the reviews to themselves for the present; they are certainly of no authority whatever, in the matter.\* And pray, doctor, what is it that will afford you any satisfaction, touching the matter in question?

Suppose you first inform us what the documents are, of which you have said so much, and which are to establish the truth of these alleged discoveries of the Northmen.

They are many and various. I suppose you don't want me to name each one individually, with a full, true, and particular account of its "birth, parentage, and education."

No, no; I should be sorry to have to listen to such a long story as that would make of it. I suppose you can tell me, shortly, what *kind* of documents they are.

---

\* It may be observed, once for all, that allusion is here made to the reviews simply for the purpose of answering, in the following pages, all the remarks and objections which have been made in them. This is necessary in order to establish the truth of the facts, since, upon those unacquainted with the *real* bearings of the question, these reviews may have had some influence. It has been the author's object, however, to answer all the objections, and meet all the difficulties, which *can* be raised, as well as those which have been raised. He has aimed also at explaining all allusions which might seem doubtful, or, in any way, give occasion to any appearance of obscurity.

That is no difficult matter, if by *documents* you mean — as the word in truth signifies — all the records which testify of these matters. The documents relating to this subject may be divided into two classes, — the one comprising manuscripts, or ancient copies of manuscripts, written within a short period after the occurrence of the facts which they relate ; — the other comprising monuments actually existing at this day in the countries visited, and which monuments were the work of the Northmen themselves.

Ha ! said the doctor, with a half sneer on his countenance ; monuments in the countries visited aye ? There are many of these in America, doubtless ?

Quite right there, doctor.

Stuff and nonsense ! I thought what all your *authentic documents* would turn out. Who ever heard of any monuments of the Northmen in America ?

— You never have, doctor, that 's very evident ; and that is just all that your indignation proves. They do exist. Of that there can be no doubt. What if I tell you that they exist in this very neighborhood ; one of them within half a mile of the very house in which we sit ?

Why, I shall say that, if you do tell me so, it will be just of a piece with all the rest of the absurd story that you have been now telling me.

Well, doctor, said Mr. Cassall, I am much of your opinion ; but, nevertheless, suppose we hear what Mr. Norset has to say upon this subject. I presume nobody would advance such an assertion, unless he imagined there were some grounds for believing it correct. There certainly does not appear much ground for this new notion.

Little enough, in truth, answered the doctor ; but, however, we will hear what there is to be said upon the subject.

You are very condescending, Dr. Dubital, it must be said. If you wish for any information on the subject, I shall be glad to render it: we had better proceed, however, regularly in the matter, and take up the first class of documents in the first place.

With all my heart, sir. What proof can you bring of the authenticity of the ancient manuscripts of which you spoke?

Just let me call your attention to one fact, doctor, before we enter on this proof. It may serve, added Mr. Norset, with a smile, to mollify your ideas of the excessive absurdity of the proposition as to the discovery of America by the Northmen.

Well, sir, what is this fact?

There is an atlas lying by your side, doctor. Have the goodness to open it at the map of the Atlantic ocean, or at the maps of the two hemispheres. Now, I want you particularly to observe the distance between Norway and Iceland, and the distances between Iceland and Greenland, and Greenland and Newfoundland. Do you observe them?

I see, sir, I see.

You cannot of course fail to perceive that it is much more than twice the distance between Norway and Iceland, that it is between Iceland and Greenland; and not far from twice the distance that it is between Greenland and Labrador, and thence on to Newfoundland.

Well, sir, I see that.

You will not, I presume, doctor, pretend to deny that Iceland was, in the NINTH century, viz. 861 and 875, discovered and *settled* by the Northmen; this being a fact which is as well known to be authentic as that Iceland exists,—and a fact which every body, having the slightest acquaintance with history, well knows.



No, sir, I do not pretend to deny it ; but this does not prove that the Northmen discovered America in the *tenth* century.

Never mind that, doctor ; it proves sufficient for my purpose. It proves that they traversed the broad western ocean to a far greater extent westward of their native home in Norway, in order to reach Iceland, than it was necessary to traverse the same ocean, beyond that island, in order to reach Greenland, — which it is equally well known that they colonized in the following century, — and thence to reach the continent of North America. What say you, doctor ?

The doctor looked puzzled ; he had not expected to be so caught by self-evident facts before his own eyes. Mr. Cassall remarked, — Certainly these facts take away from any appearance of impossibility, or even of *improbability*, in the proposition that America was discovered by the Northmen in the tenth century.

Precisely ; that is the very point I want to establish. It is as clear as daylight, and it is impossible for the most sceptical to cavil at it. It is, then, evident that there is nothing *improbable* in the account of these expeditions, all of which, excepting one, were made *from Greenland*, though by Norwegians, who had gone to Iceland, and thence to Greenland, for the sake of traffic. Thus Iceland was, you see, a kind of “ half-way house ” to the Northmen, for they stayed there 100 years before they went on to Greenland. It was a small matter for them to go onward from Greenland to Newfoundland, and thence to more southern regions of the continent of North America. I have thus, then, shown that there is no *improbability* in the narratives contained in these documents, — which is an important point in proving their truth, since, by destroying the *improbability*, it is shown

that the *probability* of authenticity and truth exists, which is always an important step towards proving *actual* authenticity and truth. We will now, if the doctor pleases, proceed to show positively that the documents are authentic, and that the narratives are true.

Proceed, sir, said the doctor, shortly.

In the first place, then, doctor, let us discuss the *external evidence*. You are well aware of the custom prevalent in the olden time, among all nations, of handing down the records of their actions by tradition ; and especially that, among the northern nations, there existed a race of men called Scalds or bards, and Saga-men or history narrators, whose sole and peculiar occupation was the recitation, in verse and prose, of the deeds of their ancestors.\*

Well, sir, what of that ?

It is not to be doubted that the main facts recorded by these traditions were historically accurate, with a little high coloring, perhaps, here and there, to add to the renown of the hero whose adventures were recorded.

Well, sir, I don't deny all this ; but what has it to do with the matter before us ?

A great deal, doctor. The discovery of a new country was a vast achievement, and would be matter of especial commemoration in these traditions ; so that, although the accounts might not have been committed to writing for a century, or upwards, after the occurrence of the event itself, still there would be every ground to admit the perfect authenticity of the main facts recorded in the documents in which such traditions were at length embodied.

---

\* This subject deserves more extended remark. Some further observations upon it will be found in note B, at the end of the volume, to which the reader's attention is requested.

What! are we coming to this kind of argument again? Do you call this proof, sir? I must see a document written by the man himself, who is alleged to have made this discovery, and which you can prove to have been so written, before I will allow the authenticity of any documents upon the subject; and it does not follow that, even then, I will admit all contained in those documents to be correct.

As for that, we have records, written by the discoverers themselves, in the monuments of their own making, now existing in this country; but, as we are not to discuss that point at present, I will say nothing on that score. The fact appears to me, doctor, to be simply this:—you have been studying Dr. Whately's "Historical Doubts."

Dr. Whately's "Historical Doubts!" I never heard of such a book.

I am surprised to hear it; for your mode of arguing so strongly reminded me of the mode of arguing there employed, that I thought you must have made the work a study. Pray, did you ever hear of Napoleon Bonaparte?

To be sure I have.

Do you mean to say that you believe such a man ever existed?

I shall like to know if any one has ever doubted the fact.

To be sure they have. How do you know that such a man ever existed? you never saw him, or saw even any thing of his hand-writing, or any single thing which he is said to have done. How, then, can you pretend to tell that he ever lived?

Really, Mr. Norset, this is rather too much of a good thing. He must be a fool that doubts whether Napoleon ever lived,—a universally known fact, which every child knows.

So you think, doctor; but I ask you for your proof, and you give me none. You call it a "universally recognized fact;" but that is neither proof nor argument. It was a universally recognized fact, that the sun moves round the earth, till, one day, Galileo ventured to broach a contrary notion. Of course, being a new idea, it was contrary to Scripture,—a universal authority in matters of science,—and Galileo was imprisoned by the cardinals. Still the sun does not move round the earth, notwithstanding the vindication by the cardinals of this as a "universally recognized fact."

Do you really mean to doubt, then, that Napoleon Bonaparte ever lived?

I do not mean to doubt it. I merely put the question to you because that is the subject treated of in Dr. Whately's "Historical Doubts." He there enters into an argument to prove that such a man never lived. Nay, so complete and convincing was this argument, that many persons imagined the fact was intended to be seriously controverted; insomuch that Dr. Whately was obliged to insert, in the fourth edition of the work, a notice, that it was not his intention seriously to doubt of Napoleon's existence, but merely to show—having special reference to Hume's "Essay on Miracles,"—that a clever man might argue about, and dispute the truth of any, the best established or most incontrovertible, fact; and that, under the cloak of philosophical inquiry and investigation, it is very possible to depart most widely from the sphere of a candid and truly philosophical examination of evidence.

Do you mean to imply, asked the doctor,—somewhat nettled at what he conceived to be a personal allusion,—that the doubts which I have uttered have been a departure from the sphere of a candid and truly philosophical examination of evidence?

In truth, doctor, I must be pardoned, if I think that such has been somewhat the case. I am aware that this originates, in your case, in the strong disinclination to relinquish an idea which you have entertained so long, and to adopt another in direct opposition to it. You must, however, be aware that you have asked for evidence which it is clearly impossible to obtain, on this, or, if might almost be said, on any other subject.

What evidence, then, do you profess to give of the authenticity of these manuscripts?

All the evidence that can be given in such a matter; evidence fully sufficient to satisfy any reasonable or candid mind.

Let us hear what kind of evidence you mean.

If you meet a man walking in the street with tottering step, decrepid strength, wrinkled brow, and hollow cheek, do you think it necessary to ascertain positively the year of his birth, before determining whether he be an old or a young man.

Certainly not; every body would see that he was an old man, by his mere looks.

Well, doctor, it is by precisely the same kind of evidence that one point, as to the authenticity of these documents, is capable of being determined. Parchment, like human muscle, waxes old in time, and puts on as visible appearances of old age. Moreover, a different character of language and form of letter is more or less peculiar to every age; more decidedly so in former than in recent times.

I am perfectly aware of all this. How does it bear upon the question?

Thus:—if certain manuscripts are produced, marked by certain characteristics, which those whose attention has been devoted to this subject know to distinguish a

particular age; the evidence is conclusive, in so far, that these manuscripts originated in that particular age. Do you dispute this argument?

I do n't know that I can dispute it.

Then, doctor, please to observe what I have now to say. I alluded, just now, to the Scalds and Saga-men and their traditions, in order to show that, had the traditions of these expeditions been much more vague, and the period of their committal to writing much more recent, than they actually were in the case before us, they would still be, in a great measure, entitled to credit. The fact is, however, as you know, that, while literary darkness overspread the whole of Europe for many centuries following the tenth, letters werē, during that very time, highly cultivated in Iceland. That is the very time and country in which these documents must, if authentic, have originated; and these facts render it in itself not improbable that they *did* then originate; which, as we saw before, is equivalent to its being *probable* that they did so originate. Hence, the proof of their *actual* authenticity becomes easier and more complete; and the reference to the characteristics to which I have alluded will, of course, be more thorough and satisfactory. You acknowledge you cannot dispute the correctness and soundness of the argument, or proof, drawn from the presence of those characteristics. Well, then, all those characteristics exist and are present in the case of the manuscripts in question.\*

Stay — how do you know this to be the fact?

I know by ample testimony, — such as will satisfy any

---

\* Engraved specimens, colored so as to become facsimiles of the original parchments, are given in the *Antiq. Amer.* These are valuable, as enabling any person to inspect, for himself, the appearances of the originals of these interesting documents.

candid mind. We have the testimony of honorable men, no way interested, except in the discovery of truth, and whose testimony is given in a public and open manner; in such a manner that the proof of its falsity is within the reach of any who will take the trouble to investigate. The manuscripts themselves are still in existence in the Royal and other libraries at Copenhagen; of course all the world cannot see them, any more than you can see Napoleon; we must, necessarily, take the testimony of those who have seen them, as conclusive.

Certainly, doctor, observed Mr. Cassall, you will not refuse to receive such testimony?

No; I do not profess to dispute it, if it is thus given.

Of that, replied Mr. Norset, your own eyes may satisfy you, for it is contained in the volume which I have already mentioned.

Very well, sir; how far does this carry you?

It proves,—and the fact is beyond the possibility of controversy,—that the manuscripts are authentic documents of an age long anterior to the time of Colon; it proves that they originated at a time when, according to the dates assigned to the events recorded in them, the authors of them *might have made themselves acquainted* with the truth of the facts related.

Upon my word, Mr. Norset, you get on by slow degrees. You rest the authenticity of these alleged discoveries upon the fact, that the authors of the narratives *might have known* whether they were true or not. Perhaps they might; what of that? they are just as likely to have known them to be false, as true; and, probably, the whole narratives are a parcel of fables, invented by them.

I really do admire, Dr. Dubital, the facility with which you jump to your conclusions. It is necessary for me,

truly, to get on by slow degrees, when I am met by such cavils and objections at every step. Let me make each step sure, however, and we shall soon, now, come to a satisfactory conclusion in the way of proof. You acknowledge that I have established the authenticity of these manuscripts, in so far as that they were written at a time when their authors might have made themselves acquainted with the facts recorded, if these facts were true. Well, then, we must now resort to another mode of evidence, in order to show that the principal facts and details recorded are true; which established, the manuscripts themselves become authority for the truth of other details.

And pray, sir, what is this evidence?

It is the *internal evidence* contained in the manuscripts themselves. If, having been written three hundred years before the time of Colon, and a much longer period before the modern discovery and settlement of the coasts described, they accurately describe the coasts of particular parts of America, we have, in that fact, evidence that the accounts contained in them are true; since it is only by the facts narrated being true, that the writers could have had the means of framing these accurate descriptions. If, moreover, we find that different accounts of the same transactions were written by different individuals, in different places, and at different times, and yet that they all agree in the main facts narrated, we have another internal proof, of the strongest kind, of the truth of the facts so recorded, as well as of the authenticity of the documents in which they are recorded. *Each of these modes of proof holds good in the present case.*

Do you mean, then, to assert that each of the manuscripts precisely agrees, in its statements, with the facts recorded in all the others?



I certainly do not mean to make such an assertion. If it were the fact,—and it is very important to bear this in mind,—if it were the fact, it would be the strongest possible evidence, that neither the narratives were true, nor the manuscripts authentic. It would plainly indicate a concerted scheme between the writers of the different records. The presence of variations between different narratives of the same transaction is a proof that there is no *concert* between the different authors of the different narratives, and thus *testifies to their authenticity*, as distinct records, originating in different individuals, unknown to, and unconnected with, or copying from, each other. Each record thus becomes separate testimony to the truth of the facts stated in all; and, since it is morally impossible that different authors, without connivance or concert, should agree in the invention and detail of a particular narrative, if documents are found which *do* thus agree in the main facts, it is complete proof of the *truth of the narration*. Thus, these *variations* are almost as necessary to the proof of the *authenticity of the documents*, as the coincidences and agreements are to the proof of the *truth of the narration*,—with this essential difference, that the *former* without the *latter* proves nothing, except that the whole is false, while the *latter* without the *former* proves *something*, but not so strongly as when *both* are found. When both are thus found together, the proof in all points amounts to *demonstration*. Archdeacon Paley has some admirable remarks in reference to this subject in one of his works. If I can borrow the book I should like to read them to you. I dare say Mrs. Goff has it in her library.

Inquiry was made, and the book was found, and Mr. Norset read the following passage:—“I know not,” says

he, "a more rash or unphilosophical conduct of the understanding, than to reject the substance of a story, by reason of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related. The usual character of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety. This is what the daily experience of courts of justice teaches: When accounts of a transaction come from the mouth of different witnesses, it is seldom that it is not possible to pick out apparent or real inconsistencies between them. These inconsistencies are studiously displayed by an adverse pleader, but oftentimes with little impression upon the minds of the judges. *On the contrary, a close and minute agreement induces the suspicion of confederacy and fraud.* When written histories touch upon the same scenes of action, the comparison almost always affords ground for a like reflection. Numerous and sometimes important variations present themselves; not seldom, also, absolute and final contradictions; yet neither one nor the other are deemed sufficient to shake the credibility of the *main fact*. The embassy of the Jews to deprecate the execution of Claudian's order to place his statue in their temple, Philo places in harvest, Josephus in seed-time; both contemporary writers. No reader is led by this inconsistency to doubt, whether such an embassy was sent, or whether such an order was given. Our own history supplies examples of the same kind. In the account of the Marquis of Argyll's death, in the reign of Charles the Second, we have a very remarkable contradiction. Lord Clarendon relates that he was condemned to be *hanged*, which was performed the *same day*; on the contrary, Burnet, Woodrow, Heath, Echard, concur in stating that he was *beheaded*; and that he was condemned upon the *Saturday*, and executed upon the *Monday*. Was any reader of English history

ever sceptic enough to raise from hence a question whether the Marquis of Argyll was executed or not? ”\* Do you acknowledge the justice of these remarks, doctor?

I do n't know that they can be gäinsayed ; but I think it is rather going out of the way to quote Paley in reference to the present subject.

I dare say you do, doctor ; because his remarks tell rather against your anxiety to overthrow the credit of these Northmen narratives. Nothing can be more strictly legitimate, however, than to quote him, inasmuch as he is treating of precisely the same class of topic as we are discussing, viz. the validity of testimony drawn from different, and, in some instances, apparently inconsistent, narratives.

Well, well, I dare say we shall find these inconsistencies rather too great to salve over in this manner.

You acknowledge, then, doctor, that, if there were a precise accordance in all the details of each narrative, it would be the strongest argument against their authenticity as *distinct* documents ?

Why, yes, there can be no doubt about that, if, as you say, they profess to have been written by different individuals, and at different times.

Such is the fact, and you shall be perfectly welcome to hunt for all the inconsistencies which I see you chuckle at the idea and hope of discovering. There never could be a more complete mass of internal evidence afforded by any documents than is afforded by these in this respect. We find every one of the narratives agreeing in the *main facts* related by each ; but that *precise coincidence in every detail*, which invariably argues spurious-

---

\* Evidences of Christianity, part iii. chap. i.

ness, is absent, for we find some facts related in each one, with respect to which all the others are silent, — which facts, however, are *not inconsistent* with those related by the others. We find, again, in several instances, a main fact stated similarly in each narrative, while the incidental circumstances, stated in the different narratives to have attended that fact, differ.

How do you mean? Let us have an example. I do not like these generalities. They are a very convenient way of getting over a difficulty.

O! an example; by all means, doctor; and we shall see who will be placed in the greatest difficulty by it. You shall have an example which is at least as strong as any that exists, and exhibits, between the different accounts, at least as great inconsistency. A certain tract of land is stated, in the different accounts, to have been visited, and is, in all, described with more or less accuracy, and called by the same name, that of KIALAR-NESS. The account of the origin of the name, however, differs in each narrative. In one it is stated that the vessel of *Thorvald*\* being driven on shore there, the keel was damaged; whereupon a fresh keel was made, and the place called, by him, Kialar-ness, (keel promontory,) from that circumstance. In another, it is stated that *Thorfinn*,† coming to the same spot, found there a keel erected on the shore, whereupon the place was named, by him, Kialar-ness. In each of these cases the description of the place corresponds, and likewise the name; the incidental circumstances alone differ. Again, in one account it is stated that Thorvald, the son of Eirek the Red, sailed to Vinland on his own account, and, while on an exploring expedition, landed at a certain spot, and was

---

\* Antiq. Amer. p. 42.

† Antiq. Amer. p. 139.

there killed in an encounter with the natives, called, in all the narratives, Skrællings. In another, it is stated that Thorvald went with Thorfinn, and, as they were going on an exploring expedition, the party landed at a spot, the description of which corresponds with the description in the former narrative, and Thorvald was accidentally killed by a Skrælling under somewhat different circumstances to those mentioned in the other account. Here, again, the *main fact* is the same in both narratives ; some of the details differ. Nothing can be a greater proof, both of the authenticity of the manuscripts, and of the truth of the narratives contained in them, than instances of this kind. Many other instances I might give, of similar coincidences in statements of the main facts, accompanied by partial differences in the details.

Well, doctor, asked Mr. Cassall, what do you say to this ? It seems to me pretty conclusive.

The doctor looked rather annoyed at being called upon to express an opinion on this point, and answered shortly ; If such are the facts, I cannot say any thing against them.

If such are the facts, doctor ! replied Mr. Norset : you may easily satisfy yourself on that point by reference to the book itself. I'll give you chapter and verse for it, I promise you.

I shall call for that presently. Have you any more proofs of the truth of the narratives ? For I advise you to strengthen yourself as much as you can.

It is very plain, doctor, that it is necessary to do this, when you are so eager to pick a hole in the argument. I have other proofs, and those not weak ones.

Let us have them.

It is worthy of observation, that the personages who figure in these narratives are not fictitious personages ;

that is, they are not individuals whose names are not elsewhere found. *They are all characters well known in history*, and we find incidental and casual allusions to the well-known events of their history, mixed up with the narratives. These facts are worthy of attention.

Well, said the doctor, that certainly is not unimportant. But, though they be known historical characters, these may still be fables fastened to their names. I must have more proofs yet.

Fables could not so easily have been fastened to their names without detection, nor is it probable that it would have been attempted in the mode of these narratives. But, however, I have abundance more proof. I have shown you that these narratives contain details, which it is absolutely impossible that they should contain, unless the whole of the main facts related are true ; details of a geographical nature I mean. I have shown you that, though written at different times and by different individuals —

Stop there a moment, Mr. Norset ; how do you know by whom they were written ? It may be very easy to show that they must have been written by different individuals ; but do you pretend to have any clue by which you are able to discover by whom they were written ?

I do, doctor ; and I shall have something to say upon that topic by and by, when, if you like it, we will examine each document separately ; meantime, let us proceed straight forward. I was saying that I had shown that, although these narratives were written by different individuals and at different times, there yet exists between all of them a coincidence in the *main facts*, while in some of the details there are trifling variations ; and that we have thus a very strong internal proof of the authenticity of the documents, and of the truth of the narratives. I have

now further to observe, that there exists another proof equally strong, — it can hardly be stronger, — of this authenticity and truth. It is this : there is frequent casual and merely incidental mention of that which implies the authenticity of these documents, and the truth of the narratives contained in them, in works well known to be of undoubted authenticity, and which were written about the same time as the documents in question, but with totally different objects, on totally different subjects, by a totally different class of authors, in different countries, and under different circumstances in every respect.

Upon my word, sir, exclaimed the doctor, putting on a look of no little surprise, you are speaking rather boldly now. We shall see whether you can establish such a proof.

You hope not, I suppose, doctor, said Mr. Cassall, with a smile.

Oh ! let him hope, said Mr. Norset, laughing ; he will find that “hope tells a flattering tale” this time. Adam of Bremen, doctor ; you have heard of him ?

Why, you have already mentioned him : nobody who knows much of literature, can be ignorant of his name.

Good ; nor of the authenticity of his writings, aye, doctor ?

I should be sorry to deny it.

Well, doctor, you know, as well as I do, that Adam of Bremen lived and wrote in the eleventh century ; some few years, he added, casting a sly look at the doctor, before your friend Colon discovered America.

Well, sir, what of that ? said the doctor, his equanimity somewhat disturbed.

Just this, doctor : you know, I suppose, that Adam of Bremen wrote a book, “On the Propagation of the Christian Religion in the North of Europe ;” and that, at the end

of this book, he added a brief tractate, (as the old writers would say,) entitled, "On the Position of Denmark, and other regions beyond Denmark," — rather a comprehensive title : well, doctor, in this work is found the following incidental remark, which my memory retains on account of its importance to the present subject : pray attend, doctor ; it is only a few lines, though of a volume of importance to the present argument : now, doctor, mark me ; "Præterea unam adhuc regionem —"

Pray, pardon me, interrupted Mr. Cassall, it is all very well for you and the doctor to read Latin together ; but, alas for me, you might just as well read Chinese or Hindostanee. May I crave that you will give us the passage in plain English.

Certainly, with the doctor's consent. I was only afraid that he might cavil at my translation, and say, perhaps, that I misrepresented the original.

O, translate it, said the doctor ; I will look at the Latin afterwards.\*

"Besides these, he," — that is, you must understand, King Svend, whose information Adam committed to writing, — "besides these, he mentioned another region, which had been visited by many, lying in that ocean," that is, the ocean which extends between Norway, Iceland, and Greenland, "which is called Winland, because vines grow there spontaneously, producing very good wine ; corn likewise springs up there without sowing. This," he adds, mind, doctor, "we learn not from fabulous report, but from the accurate accounts of the Danes,"

---

\* For the reasons stated in the text, the original shall be here added, "Præterea unam adhuc regionem recitavit, a multis in eo repertam oceano, quæ dicitur Winland, eo quod ibi vites sponte nascantur, vinum optime ferentes ; nam et fruges ibi non seminatas habundare, non fabulosa opinione, sed certa comperimus relatione Danorum."



the very same race of men, you know, doctor, who, as these ancient manuscripts inform us, discovered this Vinland. What do you think of that, doctor?

Why, it is an interpolation, I have no doubt.

An interpolation! that is good; surely, doctor, you are driven hard for an objection. The very printed copy from which I quote was printed in 1629, and manuscript copies of the original, of a date anterior to the time of Colon, are still in existence, in which the passage is contained complete. So much for your interpolation.

Doctor, you won't be able to stand against this much longer, said Mr. Cassall, with a smile.

The doctor gave a kind of internal growl, but said nothing.

No, the truth is, said Mr. Norset, that this remarkable passage is almost sufficient of itself to establish the authenticity of the documents, and truth of the narratives, whose authenticity and truth we are discussing. Here we are informed of two facts: 1st, of the existence of a land, as known in the eleventh century, whose situation and produce are described; and, 2d, it is added, merely incidentally, that information concerning this country was derived from the Danes, or men of the same race and kindred as the discoverers themselves, as stated in these narratives. Now all this is contained in a few lines of a work well known, and of undoubted authenticity; a few lines which might easily escape the reader, and which must have escaped thousands of readers, but which, from this very circumstance, of its inconspicuousness and incidental occurrence, is so much the stronger testimony in favor of my point.

How do you make that appear?

Let me quote you a few words from Dr. Paley, again, as the book is by me, and you will immediately see clear-

ly the force of my remark. Speaking of coincidences in different narratives, he observes : — “ If some of the coincidences alleged appear to be minute, circuitous, or oblique, let him (the reader) reflect that this very indirectness and subtilty is that which gives force and propriety to the example. Broad, obvious, and explicit agreements, prove little ; because it may be suggested that the insertion of such is the ordinary expedient of every forgery ; ” — and again, “ it should be remembered, concerning these coincidences, that it is one thing to be minute, and another to be precarious ; one thing to be unobserved, and another to be obscure ; one thing to be circuitous or oblique, and another to be forced, dubious, or fanciful.” \* It is obvious that these remarks apply equally well to coincidences between *different parts of the same narrative*, as to coincidences between different narratives. In the former mode we shall have frequent occasion to apply them as we discuss each narrative separately. It is one of the strongest points of *internal evidence*. In the case before us, however, we have works on totally different topics, in different languages, though written at about the same time necessarily unknown to each other, in which yet a coincidence of this kind occurs ; though it may have been unobserved, yet not obscure ; though incidental, yet not forced, dubious, or fanciful.

It must be confessed, said the doctor, that this is a strong argument ; but I must hear these narratives in detail, before I can grant that the full coincidence, asserted by you, does exist.

Ah ! I am glad I have excited in you a curiosity to hear the narratives in detail. You shall have them and welcome.

---

\* Horæ Paulinæ, chap. i.

Stay a little ; are any of these coincidences found in the writings of any other, besides Adam of Bremen ?

O, yes, in several. For example, in the works of Ordericus Vitalis, who also lived in the eleventh century, and during part of the twelfth, — and who wrote an “Ecclesiastical History,” published by Duchesne, in 1619, — occurs another more casual allusion to Vinland and its situation.\* It is unnecessary to trouble you with the passage. Many other instances might be quoted. Then, again, we find in works of fiction of a very ancient date, — a date long anterior to the time of Colon, — allusion made to Vinland, as a land well and commonly known to exist.

Can you quote any one of these ?

It would occupy too much time to quote any just now, our discussion has already been so long protracted ; but I will quote one curious old ballad to you at some other time, if you are disposed to listen to the narratives of the discovery of America, contained in the several ancient manuscripts now published.

I cannot flatter you by saying that you have yet convinced me that these narratives are true. I will, however, listen to them separately, and shall then be better able to judge whether all your observations and arguments are perfectly just. If they prove so, why, certainly, I do n't exactly know what must be said as to your proposition of the discovery of America by the Northmen.

What, doctor ! do you intimate the possibility of your giving up Colon, under any circumstances ?

The doctor looked not well pleased at the question. As to the matter of that, he answered, you must please

---

\* See Antiq. Am. p. 337.

to remember that I do not grant that you have yet proved your point.

Ah, well, I think we shall manage the rest very easily, when we examine the narratives themselves. We have not time for this now, I think; but perhaps we shall be able to do it this afternoon, or to-morrow morning.

As soon as you like, said the doctor: but stay a moment, sir; a thought strikes me, which will, perhaps, make you give up your whole argument without further discussion.

Dear me, doctor, what is coming now? It will be a pity, if, after settling all the points so thoroughly, all our argument and discussion is to be knocked on the head by one little thought, even of yours, Dr. Dubital;— you'll excuse me.

Don't be too confident in your strength, Mr. Norset, said the doctor, in a tone of considerable self-satisfaction; I think my "little thought" will, after all, be a match for all your arguments.

What is it, then, doctor? I'm all impatience.

It is this, replied the doctor, with a triumphant air; I want to know why,— if your arguments will prove the authenticity and truth of the narratives of which you have been speaking, and thus prove that the Northmen discovered America in the tenth century,— arguments, of a similar nature may not be applied to show that neither to Colon, nor the Northmen, was the credit of this discovery due; but that the ancient Greeks and Romans possessed a knowledge of this continent, which could only have been derived from personal acquaintance with its shores.

Ah! ah! ah! doctor, is that your "little thought?" then lightly may the breezes bear it; for it certainly will never affect my position, or my argument, in the slightest.

But you must give me some reason, sir, I can assure you, for despising my idea. I say that the same arguments hold good in each case.

No, no, doctor; the same coat will not fit the two cases.

But I say that it will fit them, sir; and I will not be laughed out of my idea.

Nay, doctor; I should be sorry to laugh you out of any of your ideas. Pray don't be offended; I say the same coat will not fit the two cases; and I must repeat it. The two cases are wholly different; there is neither probability nor coincidence, neither external nor internal proof to be any where perceived in the case of the Greek and Roman fancied discoveries: there is no document or narrative which supports the notion. In truth, doctor, such an idea can have no actual foundation whatever.

Well, sir, you are bound to show that such is the case, and not only to assert it.

That may be done without much difficulty. In the first place, let us take Plato's allusions in his *Timæus* and *Critias*. What are they? He makes one of the persons in the dialogue speak of a certain island, greater than Africa and Asia, situated in the immediate vicinity of the Columns of Hercules, that is, straits of Gibraltar; of an invasion of Greece by the inhabitants; of the empire of these people extending over Egypt; and, finally, makes him relate, that, soon after the invasion of Greece, a tremendous earthquake happened, and, lo and behold, one fine morning this wonderful island and all its inhabitants *were not*: the island of Atlantis had sunk beneath a whirlpool; from which time the ocean became incapable of navigation, on account of the quantity of mud which the sunken island had occasioned!

This is the history which Critias tells Socrates that his grandfather had related to him, who derived his information from Solon.\* He tells a notable tale, too, of the population of this Atlantis by the sons of Neptune,† and gives a glowing description of the produce of the land, where every thing that the heart could desire, or the thought conceive, was produced spontaneously in rich abundance. Especially does he note the great number of elephants, and other animals of vast size, in meadows, lakes, and streams, on mountain, and in valley. What a remarkable air of probability there is over this whole account! What remarkable coincidences are presented between this description, and the actual aspect and condition of America, especially as to geographical situation, and, as to produce, but, above all, as to its stability! Surely, doctor, you would have us believe that you are wading through a sea of mud, when you conceive that accounts and details such as these, are capable of destroying the validity of the arguments I have been stating.

The doctor seemed either not disposed, or unable to make any reply to these remarks. After a silence of a few moments, Mr. Cassall inquired,—

Are there no other allusions made in any of the ancient writers to which the doctor's idea may refer?

An obscure allusion is made by Ælianus,‡ in which it is said that "Europe, Asia, and Africa, compose an island, around which flows ocean," the great boundary of the world; "that only is continent which exists beyond the ocean." There is certainly little ground here for sup-

\* See Plato's *Timæus*, ad init.

† See Plato's *Critias*, ad init.

‡ *Var. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. xviii.

posing a knowledge of America to have been intimated. There is even less of probability, or coincidence, than in the former case. *Ocean* was the name applied by the ancients to the extreme boundary of the whole known world. There is here, then, an acknowledgment that, if there is a continent, of which the writer could have had no definite idea, but to which, as far as any idea is discoverable, America certainly does not correspond, it lay beyond the whole known world. The words of Aristotle are the most worthy to be quoted on this subject. In one of his numerous works\* he remarks:—“The whole habitable world consists of an island, surrounded by an ocean called the Atlantic. *It is probable*, however, that many other lands exist, opposite to this, across the ocean, some less, some greater than this; but all, except this, invisible to us.” Here is any thing but an expression of a *knowledge* of any of these other worlds. All is supposition, which, you know, the doctor can by no means admit as argument.

Are no other allusions met with, again inquired Mr. Cassall, which may refer to this western continent?

There is a curious tale told us by Pomponius Mela,† which may, perhaps, be supposed to be, in some way, connected with America, though no allusion is made to any distant unknown land. It is stated, that when Q. Metellus Celer went as proconsul to Gaul, certain Indians were given him by the king of the Germans, which Indians, as Metellus was informed, had been driven by tempest out of the Indian sea, and were found on the coast of Germany. Now, as of course they could not have been carried from the Indian ocean to Ger-

---

\* De Mundo, cap. iii.

† De Situ Orbis, lib. iii. cap. v.

many by any tempest, — which, however, alone, it is the purpose of the narration to establish,— it may be said that the individuals thus found on the coast of Germany, if any ever were found under these circumstances, which is most improbable, must have been driven, there from the coast of America. The whole story is, however, so obviously a mere marvellous invention, that no person can rationally frame any theory upon it. And even supposing it true, and supposing it further true that they were actually carried from America, no idea of such a fact was entertained by those who found them, nor is any such idea hinted at by Pomponius Mela ; but the whole story is related to prove a directly contrary idea, namely, that they came direct across the ocean from India to Germany, no continent whatever intervening.

Upon my word, doctor, said Mr. Cassall, I am rather afraid your “ little thought ” must be wasted away upon the breeze that bore it hither, as Mr. Norset would say, for I can see no appearance at all indicated, in any of these quotations from the ancients; of any knowledge possessed by them of America.

Mr. Norset was very particular indeed to make a great argument for the authenticity of the documents relating to the Northmen, said the doctor, out of minute and casual coincidences ; but he will not allow any force at all to the same argument, in respect of the ancient Greek and Roman authors.

Indeed, you are most fully welcome, doctor, answered Mr. Norset, to the full benefit of all such evidence. But where can you find a particle of it? Here are, truly, vague, indefinite allusions ; and, where there is the slightest degree of definiteness, it is as far from exhibiting the slightest coincidence with the existing state of this



country, in any one way, as the first of January is from London Bridge. Certainly there is any thing but even a minute or *oblique* coincidence, as Dr. Paley terms it. All is obscure; and if you pretend to see any coincidence, why, I can only say, and every one else will say, in his words, that it is most "forced, dubious, and fanciful."

So, then, you deny that the ancients had any idea of the existence of another region of the world, besides Europe, Asia, and Africa?

No, I do not. I deny that they had the slightest *knowledge* of any other region, but I do not deny that they may have had some vague idea of the possible existence of such region. The words of Aristotle, which I quoted, exhibit such an idea, though most vague and indefinite, and, as the fact is, incorrect. The remarkable words put, by Seneca, into the mouth of the *Chorus*, at the close of the second act of his *Medea*, afford, perhaps, the most accurate and definite allusion which has been made by any of the ancient writers to a western region beyond Europe. In even this case, however, there is no *knowledge* pretended of the region alluded to; and it must, in truth, be confessed, that when the passage is taken in connection with its context, it loses much of the force, which, taken separately, it appears to have, and which has occasioned some persons to consider it as almost a prophetic prediction of the discovery of America.

I do not at this moment remember the passage to which you allude, said Mr. Cassall, though I have some notion of having seen it somewhere quoted. Will you be good enough to repeat it, or at least a translation of it?

The following translation, said Mr. Norset, will convey, I think, pretty accurately, the sense of the original.

Naught now its ancient place retains :  
Araxes' banks the Indian gains ;  
The Persian, Elbe and Rhiné hath found,  
Far from his country's ancient bound,  
And ages yet to come shall see  
Old ocean's limits passed and free,  
Where lands, wide-stretched, beyond our view lie  
Remoter than remotest Thule.

And so you will not allow, said the doctor, that the credit of your Northmen's discoveries is at all affected by any knowledge possessed by the ancients ?

Most assuredly not, doctor. Even if the ancients had known America, and I shall be glad if you will discover any account of any voyage made by them across the Atlantic, that knowledge has, undoubtedly, been totally lost to the world, and was so to these Northmen, who never heard of Plato, or Ælian, or Aristotle, or Seneca. No, my Northmen stand as boldly before you as ever, and claim, still, to have seen the first Europeans, as far as we have any record, who ever trod a transatlantic shore.

Well, we shall see when we come to the narrative. Perhaps they may have been accidentally driven here. It will not, after all, be much to their honor.

You quite mistake the matter, doctor : I shall be able to show you that they visited this country for the express purpose of exploration ; that we have positive records of their residence on this continent, at different times, for periods of some years' duration, during which time the birth of one individual is recorded to have taken place, the ancestor of many well-known and illustrious characters, some of whom are now living.

Your pretensions seem to increase, Mr. Norset. You will have some difficulty in proving all these statements.

Not at all, doctor; I believe. Moreover, I shall be able to show you that it is very probable that a permanent colony was formed here,—I might almost say on this very spot.

I am little inclined to think you can do that. But there is one question more which I must ask you now.

What is that?

Just tell me, supposing you are able to prove all that you say you can, what is the use of it when it is proved?

I am truly surprised that you should ask such a question, doctor. If by *use* you mean use in a pounds, shillings and pence point of view, I have nothing to say to you. I am not aware that the proof of the truth or falsity of these narratives will ever put a farthing in the pocket of any man.

I don't exactly mean use in this respect; but tell me of what use, in any way, it can be.

Willingly. Did you never consider the knowledge of Colon's expeditions of any use or value? The knowledge of the expeditions of the Northmen must necessarily be, *at least*, of as much use and value. It ought to be of more. Any thing is useful which serves in any way to give healthy exercise to any of man's intellectual or moral powers; inasmuch as every thing which gives this exercise must be a source of increase, in one way or another, to the sum of man's happiness.

Increase of man's happiness! How will knowing that the Northmen discovered America eight centuries and a half ago increase my happiness?

It may and ought to do so, directly in many ways, indirectly in many others. Is it source of no pleasure to dwell upon the noble and great actions of the past? Is there no pleasure, or interest, or utility, to be derived from the comparison of events of former times with those

of our own day? Is there no lesson to be learned from reviewing the achievements and enterprises of former times, marking the opportunities and advantages possessed by those who achieved them, and drawing the comparison between these and the opportunities and advantages which the present day affords, and the achievements and enterprises which the present day exhibits? The facts in question are also peculiarly interesting and useful in a geographical point of view. They serve, moreover, to exhibit the degree in which various faculties were, at this early period, called into activity, which led to the execution of such bold enterprises; all of which is, as Vossius truly says, "Philosophy teaching by examples." \*

I perceive somewhat the drift of your meaning. But, upon my word, it will rather pull down one's pride and boasting about our advanced and enterprising age, if you can show that, eight hundred and fifty years ago, such enterprises, — then so full of every peril and difficulty, so far surpassing what would now attend them, or what even would attend them in the age of Colon, — were undertaken and successfully accomplished.

That is precisely, doctor, one of the indirectly useful lessons which the study of this subject teaches.

---

\* The author may be here allowed to refer, for an explanation of the real use of history in general, of course including facts of the nature here discussed, to "Observations on the Use and Study of History," prefixed to his "Comparative View of Ancient History, and explanation of Chronological Eras."

## CHAPTER II.

Discovery of *Iceland* by NADDODD, (A. D. 861.)— Discovery of *Greenland* by EIREK the RED, (982.)— Expeditions to Northern Regions.— Discovery of *America* by Biarni Heriulfson, (985.)— Introduction of Christianity into Greenland by LEIF EIREKSON, (999.)— Expedition of LEIF EIREKSON to *Vinland*, and residence there, (1000.)— Expedition of THORVALD EIREKSON to *Vinland*, (1002.)— Residence and Death there, (1004.)— Expedition of THORSTEIN EIREKSON, (1005.)— Story of GUDRID.— Death of THORSTEIN, (1005.)— Return of GUDRID, (1006.)

WELL, doctor, I hope your dreams have not been disturbed by warring images. Methinks the ghost of Colon should have risen to rebuke you for listening to any account of the discoveries of the Northmen; or perhaps that navigator, with his gallant crew, contesting with Biarni Heriulfson and his company, have played a busy scene before your fancy's view, when, in the silent hour of night, deep sleep falleth upon man.

No, I have not troubled myself much about the Northmen, or their discoveries, since we talked about them yesterday.

Perhaps, then, doctor, as you seem so indifferent about them and their doings, you will be unwilling to listen, as you proposed yesterday, to any account of their discoveries?

No; I'll listen to the narratives, if you wish it.

If I wish it! I admire your condescension, doctor. Certainly I will not trouble you. I should be sorry to

inflict such a task upon you, as to oblige you to listen to that in which you take so little interest.

At this moment Mr. Cassall entered hastily. Taking his seat, he said, — I have hastened as quickly as possible from the post-office, for I was afraid that I should be too late for the promised narratives.

O, said Mr. Norset, there was no danger of that; for the doctor, here, does not seem anxious to hear them at all. He intimates that, if I wish it, he will condescend to sit under the recital.

Ah! ah! said Mr. Cassall, casting a glance at the doctor, I see very plainly how it is; the doctor does not like to acknowledge that you have succeeded in exciting any interest in his mind on this subject. But I can tell you that he does want to hear the narratives, and is much interested; for it was only an hour ago, as I was leaving the house, that he called me back, and enjoined me to be quick, in order that we might have time for the narratives this morning.

This is the account of the matter, is it? said Mr. Norset, looking at the doctor.

The doctor looked as if he did not know exactly what to answer. At length he said, — If we are to have these narratives, we had better lose no time about it.

As little as you like, doctor. You see I have the "ponderous quarto" by me, and we will cull its pages as soon as you please. Are there any questions which you would wish to ask before I begin?

Yes; we must have one or two matters settled, which you promised, yesterday, that you would touch upon when we came to speak of the contents of the documents. In the first place, I want to know what these manuscripts are. You spoke of them yesterday only as a whole, taken altogether.

The account given of them in the Preface to this volume, and in the notes prefixed to each separate document, is most satisfactory, and enters into full details as to their history. Do you wish me to retail to you all these minutiae.

No, no ; we should never get to the narratives to-day, at that rate ; —

So, doctor, interrupted Mr. Norset, smiling, you are actually impatient for the narratives, are you ? I admire that.

Impatient ; dear me ; we had a long enough talk yesterday about them ; a great deal more, I dare say, than they deserve. It is not likely that I want to waste so much time over them.

Precisely ; I understand you, said Mr. Norset, laughing. Well, how much shall I tell you of the preliminary details ?

Just tell us what the separate original manuscripts contained in the book are ; what is their date ; and, if you can, by whom they were written.

That will not take long. There are two principal narratives, —

*Two narratives !* interrupted the doctor, with a contemptuous sneer ; *two narratives !* so that is all, is it ? I certainly thought, after all you said, that there would be a dozen, at least. *Two narratives !* that is all you build your castle upon, is it ?

Hear, hear, Dr. Dubital, exclaimed Mr. Norset. I do admire your virtuous indignation. How many narratives have you of the destruction of Jerusalem ?

What has that to do with the discoveries of the Northmen ?

It has this to do with it. You do n't pretend to doubt the truth of the main facts of Josephus's History ; and yet

you have no more real authority for the authenticity of these, — aye, or of any fact mentioned in Tacitus, or any other ancient writer, than you have, in these two manuscripts, for the discoveries of the Northmen. It is not because the former have been *often copied* that they become any better authority. Not that I pretend to doubt them; but they must stand upon precisely the same footing, in this respect, as these “*only two*” narratives of the Northmen. But you are decidedly in too great a hurry to find something wrong about these poor Northmen. I began to say that there are two *principal* narratives contained in this book, but was going on to mention that there are extracts given from many other ancient manuscripts, — upwards of a dozen, doctor, by a great number, — in which incidental allusion is made to the same facts which are related in detail in these two principal narratives; besides several other minor narratives bearing upon the same subject. Does that satisfy you?

Of course, the more references there are, the more complete must be the proof of authenticity, replied the doctor, in a half-disappointed tone.

Just so; and I think, therefore, that the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians has acted wisely in publishing all these extracts. The incidental mention of the facts alluded to in them all comes, you know, under that class of evidence for the authenticity of the whole which I noticed yesterday, when I quoted Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ*.

Well, sir, we’ll let Paley and his *Horæ Paulinæ* alone now, if you please. What are these two principal narratives?

Each of them gives a somewhat detailed account of the discovery of America. The same *general facts* are related in each, but the design of the narrators appears to have been different; the one desiring principally to com-



memorate the deeds of EIREK the RED and his sons ; the other desiring to commemorate the achievements of THORFINN KARLSEFNI. Thus the details contained in the two differ in some measure. The former gives a more detailed account of the deeds of Eirek and his sons, touching but slightly upon those of Thorfinn : the latter touches more slightly upon the deeds of Eirek and his sons, and is especially particular about those of Thorfinn.

Do you intend, then, to give us the benefit of each narrative separately ?

No ; I propose to make but one narrative of it, taking, as the chief authority for each portion, the original document which treats most fully of the transactions of each individual, comparing throughout, however, the two accounts together.

That will be much the best way, I think. Is the whole narrative a long one ?

Too long for us to go through the whole at one sitting. The following arrangement will, I think, be most convenient. We will this morning take the narratives of the discoveries of *Eirek the Red and his immediate family and connections*. This afternoon or to-morrow we will take the narrative of the expedition of *Thorfinn Karlsefni* ; and we will leave the *minor narratives* to be examined on a separate and subsequent occasion.

That arrangement is judicious. But I have yet one more question to ask : are the manuscripts, from which this book is printed, the genuine original documents of these narratives ? because, you know —

— That you would like to fasten some more objection upon it, if they are not, doctor. Well, it is not certain that they are so ; — take it, and make the best of it, pray ; — they are probably not the *first written documents*, but copies of them, made not very long after the date of the

originals, and bearing all the marks of exact copies, inasmuch as the forms of style and narrative are evidently those of the remote period in which the original documents were produced.

If they are merely casual manuscripts of this kind, said the doctor, I do n't think much of their authenticity. But they are not merely casual manuscripts; they form parts of historical collections made at a very early period in Iceland, which, as I have already observed, and as you are well aware, was, for a long time, the seat of great learning and valuable literature. They at this time exist in these same collections, which, however, have been transferred, the one to the Royal library, the other to the library of the university of Copenhagen. Moreover, other copies of the same and parts of the same narratives exist elsewhere, by which their correctness is capable of being well established. Observe that it is positively certain these copies were made long anterior to the time of your old friend Colon.

I see I shall get nothing but hard words, if I attempt to dispute the authenticity of these manuscripts.

No, no, doctor; no hard words. It is I who get all the hard words in these attempts of yours, which do continually put me in mind of the "Historical Doubts" I noticed yesterday.

The doctor did not seem much to relish this allusion to the "Historical Doubts."

I will only ask you one more question, he observed, more gently. Have you any clue to the authors of these narratives?

We have some clue to the authors of them, especially of that which treats particularly of Thorfinn. The one entitled, "Account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland," appears, from internal evidence, to have been originally

written in Greenland, and to have been subsequently taken to Iceland.\* There are minute errors contained in it, (which would never have been found in a fabrication, doctor,) which show that the writer was not well acquainted with Iceland; and Eirek the Red, as we shall see, resided in Greenland. As to the "Account of Thorfinn Karlsefni," there is little doubt that the writer of this was one of the numerous descendants of Thorfinn, many of whom filled conspicuous offices in the beginning of the twelfth century. His family was one of high station, and its history occupies a prominent position in the early history of Iceland. Three bishops, men of letters, his immediate descendants, lived at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries, and there is every internal probability that one of these committed to writing those records which we now have, and which originally proceeded from the mouth of Thorfinn himself. We find it mentioned in one of these records that "Thorfinn detailed the accounts of all these transactions very accurately," which marks very clearly the authority upon which the original traditions were committed to writing.

I had no idea, remarked Mr. Cassall, that so good an account could be given of these manuscripts. Nothing of all this is mentioned in any of the reviews.

Doubtless not, replied Mr. Norset. The information cannot be obtained without the perusal of the whole volume. Still fuller details will be there found on all these topics.

I suppose, said the doctor, the narrative is a curious, quaint kind of a story, with a great deal of extraneous matter introduced.

---

\* See *Antiq. Am. Præf.* p. xv.

Of course there is considerable quaintness. It is chiefly a simple and "unvarnished tale," briefly told. There is, to be sure, some extraneous matter introduced, though very little. As must be expected, we meet with evidence of the superstitious notions of the times, and have, now and then, something of a supernatural character introduced into the narrative.

I hope you will not omit this, said Mr. Cassall. I should like to see what kind of spirits walked the earth in the tenth century.

Yes, replied Mr. Norset; it will not occupy much of our time, and will serve to give some insight into the habits and modes of thinking of the northern race, at this early period.

Come, said the doctor, I suppose we are ready for the narrative now.

Quite ready, doctor; your condescension certainly increases. You will, then, vouchsafe to listen without repining?

Don't be too sure that I shall find no flaws in the accuracy of your narrative, and in the coincidences of which you have said so much.

I know very well that you will pick a hole where you can, doctor. You are welcome to do so. I will give you every opportunity, because we shall only get the nearer to the *truth* by looking out for all the flaws and inconsistencies which you are so anxious to discover.

Proceed, sir.

My notion is this, then; to proceed straight forward with the narrative, as it is here in the book; stopping, however, at each step, to examine geographical bearings; and you are either of you welcome to interrupt me with your questions as often as you like.

Agreed, said Dr. Dubital and Mr. Cassall, in one breath.

One thing I must premise, which is this : — these ancient writers are exceedingly fond of giving long strings of genealogies, which, of course, have little to do with the main facts of this history, however valuable they may be on some accounts. I shall not pretend to give you the benefit of all these, nor of all the minute details of localities connected with them, which are sometimes given.

We shall be quite content to dispense with each of these.

To enter, then, upon the narrative : — our main authority must, in the first case, be the narrative entitled “ *An account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland ;* ” any variations between the narrative here given, and that contained in the “ *Account of Thorfynn Karlsefni* ” being noticed. As I have already mentioned, however, that the former narrative is more complete than the latter, with respect to matters affecting Eirek and his sons, I shall not stop to point out every thing which, being related in the one, is omitted in the other, but only such cases as differ in the two accounts. I suppose that will be a fair procedure ?

Yes, we will allow that, said the doctor ; it is the *differences* that we must have, in order to see whether the authenticity of the documents, or the truth of the narratives, cannot be impeached.

Attend, then, to the narrative : \*

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 7. In the following translations, the author's object will be, to give the sense of the original, in terms as nearly approaching to a literal translation as the idioms of the two languages will permit. Of course, the brief, simple style, and the quaintness of writings of this early date, ought to be preserved ; they will, therefore, be here found ; and will be seen to carry, in their own simple brevity, evidence of the truth of the narratives which are related.

“There was a man named THORVALD, of goodly lineage. Thorvald and his son EIREK, surnamed the RED, were compelled to fly from Jadar, (on the south-west of Norway,) on account of a homicide committed by them. They settled in Iceland, at that time thoroughly colonized:—”

Pardon me for interrupting you so soon, said Mr. Cassall; but may I ask when, and by whom, Iceland was first settled? I do not recall the facts.

Certainly; was the reply. Iceland was colonized by INGOLF, a Norwegian, or Northman, and his followers, in 875. He was the first who cast his door-posts towards the Icelandic shores.\* The island had, however, been discovered a few years previously, in 861, by a pirate, or trader, — for the term pirate was hardly understood in the same sense then as at present, — named NADDODD. It is, however, a very remarkable fact, and one well worthy to be recorded, that Iceland was inhabited by a race of *Christians* long before the pagan Northmen settled there; which latter were not converted to Christianity till the year 1000. We have the highest authority

---

\* There was a very curious custom prevalent among the Northmen. The columns raised in front of their houses were esteemed sacred. They were held, while stationary, in much the same estimation as the *ara et foci* among the Romans. They were generally rudely carved at the top, to represent Thor, or some other of their gods, and stood as the door-posts of the house of the head of every family. When the household was removed, these columns were carefully preserved, and erected where the new habitation was fixed. They were thus, in emigration, esteemed somewhat like the *household gods* of the ancients. The most peculiar part of the superstition attached to them was this: when the party emigrated to a foreign land, across the sea, he took these sacred columns with him, and, when he approached the shore of the new land, he cast them overboard onto the waters; and, where they were driven ashore, he fixed his dwelling. Thus Ingolf did when he went to Iceland, and the circumstances attending this event show the extent to which the

for the truth of this fact. I will quote the words of the celebrated Landnamabok, (*Land roll* of the first settlers in Iceland,) the authenticity of which none can dispute. "But, before Iceland was settled by the Northmen, there lived men there called by the Northmen, PAPÆ. These men were Christians, and are believed to have come *from the west*, over the sea." This expression, "*from the west*," would seem to imply that they came from *America*, where, as we shall find,\* a Christian race lived in the *tenth* century, at any rate. In the case before us, however, there can be little doubt that this expression refers to *Ireland*, which country was usually known to the Northmen by the name of the "west country," as being west in respect of Norway, their original home. We shall meet with numerous instances of this use of the term. That this is the true sense here, the remainder of this passage shows: "for there were found Irish books, and various instruments, whence it was known that they were *Westmen*. These things have been found in Papey ("Isle of the Papæ," — an island on the east coast of Iceland, still known by the same name,†) and Papylio (a

---

superstition was carried. He cast his door-posts towards the shore, but they floated on the water for a long time, and were driven out of sight. At length he landed on a promontory at the *southeastern* extremity of the island, called, to this day, *Ingolfshofdi*. *Three years afterwards*, some of his servants were exploring on the extreme *southwestern* part of the island, and they found there these very columns cast ashore. They informed Ingolf, and, although the spot where he then dwelt was pleasant and fertile, and the one where the columns were discovered was remarkably sterile and desert, he yet removed his whole family to the latter, and there erected his dwelling. This latter place was subsequently called *Réykjavík*, and is, at this day, the capital of Iceland.

\* See chap. v.

† This island will be seen marked with particular conspicuousness in the map to *Henderson's Iceland*, no reference whatever being, however, made by him to the facts above stated.

settlement in the interior.) It is also recorded in English books, (the works of the "venerable Bede," who flourished in the eighth century,) that in that time expeditions were made to this country, (Iceland.)"

This is indeed a remarkable passage. Is there no more information given as to these *Papa*?

None, whatever. The fact itself is mentioned in several other ancient manuscripts, besides the *Landnamabok*, but with no fuller details, except that these Christians left the land as soon as the heathens settled there.

From the time of Ingolf, then, Iceland has been inhabited by a race of Norwegian origin?

Exactly so; and for the greater portion of the time in close connection with the parent state. To proceed:—The father of Eirek soon died, but Eirek seemed to have inherited some portion of his spirit, for he got into quarrels with his neighbors, of which homicide was again the consequence; though the last quarrel seems to have originated in an injury unjustly inflicted upon him. "Having been condemned by the court," proceeds the narrative, "he fitted out a vessel. When all was ready, those who had been the partisans of Eirek in the recent quarrel, accompanied him to some distance. Eirek informed them that he had determined to seek the land which Gunnbiorn had seen, when, driven into the western ocean, he had found the islands thence called *the rocks of Gunnbiorn*."

Where are these islands situated? interrupted Mr. Cassall.

They are supposed to have been situated nearly at an equal distance between Iceland and Greenland, was the reply of Mr. Norset. Of their actual existence and visitation formerly, there can be no doubt, since they are



mentioned in the oldest and most authentic records of Iceland. They are, however, now totally unknown. Whether they have been submerged, or whether the danger and difficulty of navigating that region of the ocean at this day, so much greater than formerly, is the cause of their being unknown, is uncertain.

It is singular that, having been thus known within record, they should be unknown now, if they have not been submerged.

Why, the fact is, the ocean in this region has, since its first navigation by the Northmen, become gradually blocked up, if I may so speak, by the descent of arctic ice; so that the track which was formerly navigated is now totally impassable. There is a curious account of the course pursued to Greenland contained in this volume,\* in which the old track is mentioned, and its gradual stoppage noticed. This account was written in the fourteenth or early part of the fifteenth century.

I was not aware that such a change had taken place in the condition of these regions. The fact of this change is remarkable.

So in truth it is. It is historically important. To proceed with the narrative: — Eirik determined to seek the rocks of Gunnbiorn, “saying that if he found land there he would revisit his friends. He set sail from Snæfellsjökul,† (a mountain on the western coast of Iceland.) At length he found land, and called the place Midjökul. Thence he coasted along the shore in a southerly direction, in order to observe whether the land were habitable.

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 302, &c.

† An interesting description of the present appearance of Snæfellsjökul is given in *Henderson's "Journal of a Residence in Iceland."*

He passed the first winter in Eireksey, (Eirek's island,) near the middle of Eastbygd," (eastern habitable tract.)

Snæfellsjökul, Midjökul, Eireksey, Eastbygd! exclaimed the doctor; certainly these Northmen could give hard names, if they could do nothing else. And pray, sir, in what part of the world were Midjökul and Eastbygd?

That is very easy to determine, doctor. Where do you think a man would be most likely to be carried, if he sailed direct west from Iceland as Eirek did? Just glance at the map, and you will see in a moment that it must be *Greenland*. There is no doubt about this matter, for, from the first discovery of the land by Eirek, it was regularly colonized and inhabited, till the colony was driven out, or destroyed, by the encroachments of the arctic ice.

And, pray, in what part of Greenland was Eastbygd?

There were two principal settlements in Greenland; one on the western coast, the other on the southwestern extremity of the peninsula. The former was termed Westbygd, the latter, as lying more to the eastward, Eastbygd. Eastbygd appears to have always contained the most populous colony. I must observe that in the "account of Thorfinn," Eireksey is placed in Westbygd, and not in Eastbygd.

What! an inconsistency already! cried the doctor, with an expression of some exultation.

No very great inconsistency, doctor. Eireksey was merely the name given to the spot where Eirek passed his first winter. He left it immediately, as we shall see, and never returned; so that the exact situation was probably never known. Moreover, the different manuscripts of the "account of Thorfinn" differ in the reading of this word, some making it Eastbygd, as in the

“account of Eirek the Red.” So you get no possible objection out of this diversity, doctor.

I hate *various readings*, said the doctor.

I do n't, said Mr. Norset; for they often enable you to reconcile the sense of a passage. Many a time have I found a gleam of light shed over a page of Cicero, by a *various reading*. In the case before us, Eastbygd is, there can be little doubt, the correct reading. You will observe, doctor, that this, at first sight, plain inconsistency, would never have appeared in a fabrication. This very case becomes, therefore, an internal proof of the authenticity of the documents, and truth of the narratives. But to proceed: — “In the following spring, Eirek entered Eireksfiord, (Eirek's creek or inlet,) and there fixed his residence. During the summer of the same year, he explored the western part of the country, imposing names on various places. He passed the following winter also in this land, but in the third summer he returned to Iceland. He called the land which he had thus discovered, *Greenland*, saying that men would be induced to emigrate thither, by a name so inviting.”

Upon my word, said Mr. Cassall, that was a cunning scheme.

It was, indeed, said Mr. Norset; Eirek evidently knew what he was about.

Was Eirek, then, the first who discovered Greenland?

So it would appear from all authentic accounts. There is, it is true, mention made of Greenland in a papal bull of Gregory IV. A. D. 835; but there is not the slightest doubt, from the internal evidence, that this bull was either altogether a forgery of a later day, or that, being actually promulgated at this date, the passage relating to Greenland was spuriously inserted at a much more recent period, for ambitious purposes.

Was Greenland ever much further explored, as well as settled, after the time of Eirik? He seems to have spent a whole season in explorations.

The discoveries of the Northmen in the arctic regions are little less remarkable than their discoveries on the continent of America; and of the former there can be no possible doubt. Not even the doctor will be able to cavil at their truth.

Dear me, said the doctor, rousing himself, what is your evidence here, that you seem so confident in its strength?

The evidence is perfectly conclusive, doctor. There is an interesting narrative contained in this book, of a voyage of discovery made up Baffin's Bay, and through Wellington Channel, as they are now termed, and most probably further. With this narrative I will not trouble you in detail. But I will state that, in the year 1824, an inscription and other monuments were found in the island of KINGIKTORSOAK, on the west coast of Greenland, in  $72^{\circ} 55'$  of north latitude, which inscription is now in the possession of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians. It is in the Runic character, and establishes, beyond the possibility of doubt, the fact, that the bold Northmen navigated these northern regions, beyond which even the boldest British navigators have scarcely passed, in the twelfth century. These are facts, doctor; you are fond of facts; there is no hypothesis or supposition.

Well, said the doctor, I will, for once, allow that, the facts being as you state, there cannot be any doubt of the truth of these extraordinary explorations, — for I will allow them to have been extraordinary.

Then let me ask you, doctor, whether, granting, as you necessarily must, the truth of these extremely arctic

explorations, you can any longer doubt the high probability of the discovery of this more Southern portion of America by the same men? I need not say that, in the discovery of Greenland, — which it is thus proved that they did make, they had in fact discovered America, — *at least as much* as Colon ever discovered it.

You have completely tripped up the doctor, Mr. Norset, said Mr. Cassall, and caught him before he was aware of it. Do you wish Colon good morning, doctor?

The doctor hesitated, and appeared anxious to find some mode of escaping from his dilemma.

Well, said he at last, with a kind of effort, I suppose, then, the Northmen did discover America. I wish you had not got that inscription from Kingiktorsoak. I could have battled out the manuscript.

I dare say you would have tried, doctor, though perhaps not successfully; however, that valuable inscription has saved me all my labor, because it is one concerning which there can be no shade of doubt, being entirely in the Runic character, and straight-forward and plain enough. I will describe it when we come to talk of the second class of documents.

It does not follow, however, said the doctor, that, because the Northmen thus explored Greenland and the arctic regions, they should have explored, as you assert, these more southern parts of the American continent.

It does not absolutely *follow*, I know, but it is rendered very *probable*, and, by the testimony which we have, the fact can be completely established. At any rate, in discovering Greenland, they discovered America at least as much as Colon ever did, and that is my grand point *at present*.

I am afraid we shall forget all about Eirek the Red, said Mr. Cassall. Pray, what became of him after his return to Iceland?

He stayed there during the winter and early part of the following year. "In the ensuing summer, he returned to the land which he had discovered, to fix there his permanent residence."

Is there any possibility of fixing the date of this event? inquired Mr. Cassall.

Happily there is, and that very exactly. The narrative adds, "This event happened fifteen winters before the Christian religion was established in Iceland." Now, it is a well-known historical fact, that the Christian religion was established in Iceland, through the efforts of Olaf, king of Norway, in the year 1000. The emigration to Greenland, therefore, took place in the year 985, and the discovery of the country by Eirek three years earlier, namely, 982. The names of many persons are recorded who accompanied Eirek the Red to Greenland, and fixed their habitation there; out of 25 ships which accompanied him, only 14 reached Greenland, the rest being lost or driven back to Iceland. Among those which reached Greenland, the ship of HERIULF, the father of Biarni Heriulfson, was one. Heriulf was kinsman to Ingolf, the first settler in Iceland.

I presume, then, that the surname *Heriulfson* merely signifies "son of Heriulf," just as we have surnames, *Johnson, Williamson, &c.*

Exactly so. The son frequently took his father's name as an addition to his own, and was always designated by it, as a surname, when the father's name was well known.

What happened after the colonization of Greenland? inquired the doctor.

The narrative proceeds immediately following to allude to an event in Leif Eirekson's (son of Eirek) history; but we will pass over that for the present, as we shall

recur to his history more in detail by and by. We come next to the account of the discovery of the continent of North America by Biarni Heriulfson.

Now, doctor, said Mr. Cassall, I hope you are all in readiness with your weapons of contest.

I am glad that we have got to Biarni Heriulfson at last, said the doctor. We shall soon see, now, whether there is any truth in this story.

I must remark, said Mr. Norset, that no mention is made of Biarni Heriulfson in the "account of Thorfinn Karlsefni."

So, said the doctor, there is no allusion to him, except in this narrative, aye? I thought as much. How do we know that such a man as Heriulf ever lived, or went to Greenland? Your reed begins to shake, Mr. Norset.

The breeze will pass over it without inflicting any bruise or injury, replied Mr. Norset. There is allusion made to Heriulf in another manuscript, quoted in this volume,\* and that manuscript, too, one of the highest possible authority, no less than the *Landnamabok* of Iceland, to which I have before alluded, and whose authenticity no one will impeach.

Well, what says the *Landnamabok* about him?

It simply states that Heriulf went with Eirek the Red to Greenland. One or two of those "incidental coincidences" occur, between the brief notice in the *Landnamabok* and the details in the "account of Eirek the Red and of Greenland," which are such strong proofs of authenticity, — such as the name of one of the companions of Heriulf, a Christian, and an incident which is mentioned as having happened to him. The detail of the events of the subsequent voyage of Biarni is not

---

\* *Antiq. Am.* p. 187.

given; it would be totally out of place in the Landnamabok.

But how do you explain the circumstance of there being no mention made of Biarni Heriulfson in the "account of Thorfinn?"

You may be sure of this, doctor, that this mention would not have been omitted, had these accounts been fabrications. Being authentic, however, the circumstance of the omission is very easy to be explained. Biarni Heriulfson, as you will presently see, though he saw these coasts and described them, yet did not land here. He carried the report home to others, and they came out on exploring expeditions. The greatest credit and honor were then justly esteemed to belong to them, and their names were principally celebrated. Since the narrative of Eirek the Red, however, was composed in Greenland, and Biarni was the son of one of Eirek's companions, and was well known to Eirek's sons, who most probably dictated the original composition of this narrative, it was natural that his voyage should be noticed by them, though it was passed over in silence by the Icelandic narrator, to whom Biarni was unknown, or by whom, if known, his voyage was considered of little importance.

Well, I will find some flaw in your narrative, yet.

Pray attempt it. Now I beg your attention to this brief account of Biarni's voyage, because much of the geographical question hinges in some measure upon it.

"Heriulf had a wife named Thorgerd, and a son named Biarni,—a youth of great promise. This young man was seized with a great desire to travel, and was successful in obtaining both fortune and honor. He passed the winters alternately abroad and at home with his father. Biarni had recently fitted out a merchant



vessel, and had spent the last winter in Norway. During his absence it was, that Heriulf had passed over, with his whole household, in company with Eirek, to Greenland. In the same ship with Heriulf," continues the narrative episodically,—and this is the incident alluded to in the *Landnamabok*,—"was a Christian from the Hebrides ; —"

I beg your pardon, exclaimed the doctor ; but why, in the name of goodness, should the writer of this narrative, or of the *Landnamabok*, go out of his way to tell us about a Christian, from the Hebrides or any where else, being in the same ship with Heriulf ?

For an obvious reason ; answered Mr. Norset. The Northmen of Iceland and Greenland were as yet pagans. A Christian was a kind of *lusus*, and his presence a remarkable circumstance, especially when, as we shall presently see to have been the case with this Christian, he took occasion to give public evidence of his confidence in his faith.

And I must crave your pardon, too, for detaining you, said Mr. Cassall ; but how came any one from the Hebrides to be in the ship of Heriulf ?

Because the Hebrides originally formed part of the dominion of these Northmen, and there was frequent communication between them and the others of their race. To traverse the ocean was, to all these islanders, almost the chief occupation of their lives.

What became, then, of this Christian ?

He is merely introduced on account of a prayer which he offered up while the ship was passing a dangerous whirlpool which lay in that region of the ocean. This prayer, it may be presumed, appeared so remarkable to his companions, that the fact was recorded, and a scrap of a single verse,—for his prayer was in the form of a

hymn, — preserved. This may, perhaps, be pretty correctly translated as follows: —\*

“ O thou, who holy men dost try,  
Benignant, — guide me on my way;  
Of heaven and earth, thou Lord on high,  
From ill protect my path alway.”

Then we hear no more of this Christian?

Not a word.

Short and pithy, it must be confessed.

The narrative goes on: — “ Heriulf fixed his residence at Heriulf-ness: he was a man of great authority. Eirek the Red fixed his seat at Brattahlid.”

Were these in Eastbygd or Westbygd? asked Mr. Cassall.

Both in Eastbygd; that was always the most flourishing and favorite colony. Their situation was, therefore, towards the southwestern extremity of the peninsula of Greenland.

“ In all this region,” continues our narrative, “ Eirek possessed chief authority. All were subject to his will. These were his children, Leif, Thorvald, and Thorstein; he had also a daughter named Freydis. She was married to a man named Thorvard, and they lived at Gardar, which became subsequently the Episcopal seat; she was overbearing, Thorvard weak-minded; she married him for the sake of his money.”

What! up to that folly in those days! exclaimed the doctor.

Folly, you may well call it, and crime too, remarked Mr. Norset. It was even so.

---

\* It has been the object of the author, in converting into English verse this and all other poetical remains in these documents, to adhere, as closely as possible, to the metre of the original, as well as to its style and quaintness.

“Biarni,\* during the same summer, arrived at the port of Eyraar, (southwest of Iceland,) his father having just before left the island. Biarni, somewhat troubled, was unwilling to disembark. When the sailors inquired what course he intended to pursue, he replied, ‘To do as I have been accustomed, and spend the winter with my father. I wish, therefore, to proceed to Greenland, if you are willing to accompany me thither.’ All professed their willingness to accede to his desires. Then said Biarni, ‘Our course seems somewhat foolish, when none among us has ever crossed the Greenland ocean.’ Nevertheless, they put out to sea, when they had refitted their vessel. They made sail for three days, until they were out of sight of land. The fair wind then fell, and strong northeasterly † winds sprang up, accompanied by thick fogs. They were borne before the wind for many days, they knew not whither. At length, the light of day being once more visible, they were able to discern the face of heaven. They sailed one day further before they saw land. As they discussed what land it was that they then saw, Biarni said that he thought it could not be Greenland. They asked him whether he would wish to make for land or not. ‘My advice is,’ said he, ‘that we approach nearer the land.’ They did so, and presently perceived (now, doctor, attend) that the land was not mountainous — ”

Rather strange, interrupted the doctor, to observe such a negative quality as that the land was “*not mountainous*.” This is rather suspicious, methinks.

Just the contrary, doctor. The fact of its being *not mountainous* was precisely a fact which was calculated

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 20.

† Cf. Antiq. Am. p. 428, note b.

to attract their particular attention, the narrative being a true one, — but most improbable to have been thus noticed in a fabrication, — since Iceland, and Norway, and almost all the lands they knew, *were mountainous* to a very great degree. The mention of this land, then, as *not mountainous*, is a striking illustration or proof of the truth and authenticity of the narrative, especially when, as we shall see, it corresponds so exactly with the actual fact of the geographical nature of the tract thus seen.

Do you pretend, then, to be able to determine what land this was, from these vague remarks? Much credit, truly, will be due to your story, if this is your mode of determining geography!

Do n't be in quite such a hurry, doctor, again I must caution you. We have not yet finished the description of this land. Perhaps if you will allow me to do so, and will attend carefully to the remainder of the narrative, observing narrowly the course which was sailed, you will see that we have some distinct clue to the fixing of the actual geographical position of the lands thus seen.

Proceed, then; we shall soon see.

“ — They perceived that the land was not mountainous, but was covered with wood, and had rising ground in many parts. Leaving the land to the left hand, — or the larboard, if you like, — they put the ship about, with the stern towards land. Then they sailed two days before they saw land again. They asked Biarni whether he thought that this was Greenland. He said that he did not think that this was Greenland any more than the former land, ‘for they told me,’ said he, ‘that there are great mountains of ice in Greenland.’ Presently, drawing nearer, they perceived that this land was low and level, and overgrown with wood. Then, the fair wind falling, the sailors said that they should like to land. Biarni would not permit it: — ”

He does not seem to have had much curiosity, said Mr. Cassall.

All this adds to the evident authenticity and truth of the narrative, remarked Mr. Norset. - This want of curiosity, as, at first sight, you justly term it, would not have been seen in a fabrication, especially thus unaccompanied by any explanation of its cause. The account being true, however, it is easy to explain very naturally; what, at first sight, seems a want of curiosity; and the explanation becomes one of those *oblique coincidences* which are such strong internal evidence of truth. Biarni, you know, was seeking to reach his father's residence, there to spend the winter. It was already late in the season when his company had left Iceland. They had been driven much out of their course by adverse weather, and had lost much time. He was anxious to lose as little more as possible.

Well, that certainly accounts for it.

The sailors strongly urged him to land, as we shall see. - "They pretended," continues the narrative, "that there was a want of wood and water. 'You need neither of these,' said Biarni; hence arose, however, some complaint on the part of the sailors. At length, they hoisted sail, and, turning their prow from land, they stood out again to sea; and, having sailed three days, with a southwest wind, they saw land the third time. This land was high and mountainous, and covered with ice. They asked Biarni whether he wished to land here. He said no; 'for this land appears to me little inviting.' Without relaxing sail, therefore, they coasted along the shore, till they perceived that this was an island. They then put the ship about, with the stern towards land, and stood out again to sea," — now mark what follows, doctor, — "with the same wind, which, blowing up very

strong, Biarni desired his men to shorten sail, forbidding them to carry more sail than, with such a heavy wind, would be safe. When they had thus sailed four days, they saw land the fourth time. Then they asked Biarni whether he thought that this was Greenland, or not. He answered, 'This, indeed, corresponds to the description which was given me of Greenland: let us make for land.' They did so, and approached, towards evening, a certain promontory. It was on this very promontory that Heriulf, the father of Biarni, dwelt. Then Biarni betook himself to his father's house, and, having relinquished a seafaring life, he remained with his father as long as he lived; and, after his death, took possession of his estate." And thus ends the account of Biarni Heriulfson; and no account could, I am sure, bear about it more internal evidence of its truth.

That may be very true as to other particulars, said the doctor; but we have the geographical points to determine yet. What tracts of land were those seen by Biarni? Unless you can clearly show this, and can show that a coincidence exists between the descriptions here given and the actual condition of these lands, the whole thing falls to the ground.

That may be done without difficulty. In order to show this in the clearest and fairest manner, let me request you and Mr. Cassall to take the map, — the atlas lies by your side, — and, following the description of Biarni's course, say what four points you think must be indicated. This is what I did before I read the geographical notices contained in this book, and I found the points which I fixed upon precisely to correspond with those which these notices suggest. Now remember, Biarni left Iceland, (its southwest extremity,) of course going to the westward; after some time a strong northeasterly wind sprang up, which lasted

many days. One point is deserving notice here: Biarni was seeking Greenland, which he knew lay to the *west* of Iceland. It is obvious, therefore, that, during all his course, he would *attempt to steer west*, but especially so on the day during which, after the tempest had abated, he sailed on without coming within sight of land. Thus, then, although the tempest was only north by east, he would be driven more to the westward, that is, nearer to the American coast, than the mere force of the tempest alone would carry him. When the storm had ceased, Biarni came, after a day's sailing, within sight of land. Putting about, the land lying to the larboard, he stood out to sea, and came, after two days' sailing, again in sight of land: *Standing out to sea* again, with a *south-west* wind, he came, in three days' time, to another land, which, sailing round, he discovered to be an *island*. *Putting the ship about* a second time, and standing out to sea yet again, he sailed for four days with the same wind, only blowing more heavily, and saw land the fourth time, for which he made, and found it to be GREENLAND. Observe all these particulars, *the last point being known to be Greenland*, and the others to be situated to the *southwest* of it, at distances in the proportion of 4, 3, and 2, though with stronger winds to the 4 than to the 3 and 2. You will not fail to observe the incidental expression, — a remarkable one, as I think you will allow, — that, after having reached the *first* land seen, and the *third*, *the ship was put about* before standing out to sea. This is *not said in the case of the second land seen*. Obviously, then, the course from the *first* to the *second* was *different* from that by which the ship had been driven to the first: the course from the *second* to the *third* was the *same* with that from the *first* to the *second*; the prow was merely turned from land; that is, the vessel put out

to sea ; while, after having coasted round the third land and discovered that it was an island, the ship was obliged to be put about again before it could go on in the same course, (from southwest to northeast,) as it had pursued from the second to the third land. I call your particular attention to these facts, because, as you will presently see, they afford a very remarkable illustration of the "oblique coincidence," — "minute," but not "obscure, forced, dubious, or fanciful," — and a coincidence which is so purely incidental that it is morally impossible it could, by any chance, have crept into a fabrication. Now observe if there is any course, in which all the conditions and circumstances thus noticed must be present, if the narrative be a true one. What do you make of it? remember that, in each case, after seeing land, the ship *stood out to sea* till land was seen again : of course, then, the three points must be three promontories.

I should certainly say, observed Mr. Cassall, after glancing at the map for a few minutes, that there can be no doubt or difficulty at all about the matter ; I mean, speaking of *relative position* only, not considering the descriptions of the country.

No ; we will leave the latter point for the present, and refer now only to relative position. What do you make of it ?

Why, said he, following the map with his finger as he spoke, I cannot conceive that it is possible for there to be any doubt about the matter. Here is Iceland ; on the one side Europe, on the other America ; the one to the southeast, the other to the southwest, of Iceland. Biarni leaves the southwestern extremity of Iceland, and sails for three days in an unknown course and ocean, but more or less to the westward. That would take him, I




suppose, to about  $60^{\circ}$  north latitude, and  $35^{\circ}$  west longitude from Greenwich. He is then driven for many days by a strong northeasterly wind. This must, of absolute necessity, carry him towards the eastern coast of this continent of North America. Well, when the fogs clear off, he sails a day longer, and then sees land and makes towards it ; now, then, we have to determine what point of land this was. It appears to me that this becomes very plain upon comparison of the incidental remarks as to the number of days' sailing, and as to the course of the vessel. After he had seen the first land, *he put the ship about*, the land lying to the larboard. This is, of course, just as good as telling us that he sailed from the southwest to the northeast, since he had been driven to that land from the northeast. We are, moreover, told that this sail was made with a "*favorable wind*," and the subsequent sail, from the second point to the third, was made *without putting the ship about*, that is, on in the same course, and we are specifically told that this latter sail, as well as the next, was made with a southwest wind. Certainly all these coinciding data afford strong internal evidence of truth. Well, we want three points at the proportionable distances from each other of 2 and 3, the last of these being, with stronger winds, though in the same direction, at the proportionable distance of 4 from a known point, namely, the southern extremity of Greenland ; this last being also discovered, by coasting round it, to be an island, and the ship being obliged to be *put about* again before they could, after having coasted that island, reach Greenland by sailing to the northeast. It is impossible that the promontories or headlands which he saw could be otherwise than these three ; first, that which is formed by the three States of CONNECTICUT, MASSACHUSETTS, and RHODE

ISLAND,\* included with which LONG ISLAND would, as seen at a distance, in approaching from the ocean, appear a part; second, NOVA SCOTIA, most probably the point of Cape Sable; third, NEWFOUNDLAND.

Exactly, exclaimed Mr. Norset, an expression of real gratification glowing on his countenance; those were the points on which I myself fixed, before reading the *annotations* in this volume, and I think that every body must fix upon them. They are those fixed upon by Rafn in his Annotations. Every point of the description of the course of the vessel is exact; first, after three days' sail to the westward of Iceland, being carried many days to the southwest; then, having come within sight of land, putting the ship about, the land lying to the larboard, and sailing on for two days; then, sailing for three days to the northeast, from the second headland to the third, which is precisely the relative situation of St. John's, the most prominent part of Newfoundland, to Nova Scotia; thence, sailing along the coast of Newfoundland, till they discovered that it was an island,—which must have carried them as far as Belle Isle; thence, putting about, and sailing on with a strong southwest wind, till they reached Greenland. You ought, too, particularly to observe the forms of the different headlands; those of Cape Cod and Newfoundland lie almost due east and

---

\* The most prominent point of this promontory is Cape Cod. It must here be observed that there is some uncertainty about the name of this promontory. While almost every map applies the name *Cape Cod* to the extreme northern point of this promontory only, and the name *Barnstable* to the main portion of the promontory, the *whole* of the promontory seems to be *vernacularly* termed *Cape Cod*. Let it be understood, then, that, throughout this work, the term *Cape Cod* will be applied to the *whole* of the -shaped promontory, extending from Buzzard's Bay, westward and northward.

west, and north and south, the northern cape of each, however, inclining to the west; Nova Scotia, on the contrary, lies almost due northeast by southwest. It would be absolutely necessary, therefore, in order to sail from either Cape Cod or Newfoundland in a direction from southwest to northeast, to *put the ship about, with the stern towards land*; while this would *not* be necessary, or possible, in the case of Nova Scotia. All that could be done in the latter case, would be to “turn the prow from land,” and so put out to sea. In each case, the land would necessarily lie to larboard in their northeast course. Could any thing be more precise than the whole of the facts and circumstances stated; and yet told in such a way, in the narrative, that the facts, whence we are able with such certainty to fix on the localities, are merely dropped incidentally. Is it possible to doubt the authenticity of the document, or the truth of the narrative, when we see how precisely these incidental notices correspond with the facts as they exist, and with the circumstances, as they must have been, if the narrative be a true one? It is impossible to have fabricated such remarkable incidental coincidences. The internal evidence amounts to demonstration. What say you, doctor; do you give up your opposition?

The doctor had looked about him during the whole of the remarks of the last two speakers, apparently somewhat puzzled what to think or say. He looked first at one, and then at the other, and then at the map; then pulled off his spectacles, wiped them and put them on again, and then gazed alternately as before. At last he said, — as a man speaks who has but one hope left him; — I want to know how it was, that, if Biarni was driven from the northeast so far as to come within sight of Cape Cod, he did not see the other promontories of

Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, as he was driven down, but only as he returned? Come, added he, looking at Mr. Norset as if he had made a great discovery, I think that I have found a fatal flaw in your narrative at last.

Not so fast, doctor, replied Mr. Norset, with a smile; do you not remember that it is expressly, though incidentally, stated that he was driven by a northeast wind, *accompanied by thick, dense fogs*? Ah! doctor, you look blue at that, and well you may; for you well know that he might have passed within a quarter of a mile of land, and could not have seen it through the fog; and you will remember that, after the fogs cleared off, he sailed only one day before seeing Cape Cod. Nova Scotia is more than one day's sail from Cape Cod; so that that point must have been passed, and out of sight, before the fogs cleared off. Thus it is, you see, doctor, that all the parts of a true narrative are consistent with each other. It would have been impossible but that, in a fabrication, we should have found some inconsistencies of this kind.

Well, well, it all looks very fair. I dare say you think you've made it out now, beyond the possibility of a doubt; but there are the descriptions of the headlands seen to come yet. Perhaps we shall find that the writer of the narrative has not chanced to hit quite so luckily there. He could hardly have contrived to make his tale coincide, in all points, with facts about which he could know nothing at all.

Chanced to hit! doctor, exclaimed Mr. Norset; upon my word, you have no right now, at any rate, to go on talking as if you knew this was all a fable. You will have the goodness to observe that it is in vain to profess to believe that the manuscripts of these documents are fictitious. It is *positively certain* that these manuscripts were written some centuries before the time of Colon,

being, then, merely the writing down of traditions, whose value has been seen.\* What we have to do now is to determine whether they contain genuine details of true expeditions. If they contain only *fables*, it is impossible that we should find descriptions, facts, and circumstances, corresponding with what must have been present if the accounts had been true, because the writers could have no means, before America had been explored, of making the fabrication, not possessing a knowledge of the facts brought together in the fable. You have seen that these descriptions, facts, and circumstances, *do actually* correspond with what must have been present if the narration be true. It is perfectly idle, therefore, to talk of a "tale," and "hitting luckily." I assert that the truth of this narrative has been already *demonstrated*. But, however, I will take you at your word. The writer *could not* have made "his *tale* coincide in all points with facts, about which he knew nothing at all," unless his tale were a true history. Let us proceed, then, to examine the local descriptions. But you must remember that Biarni did not *land*: he saw the coasts only from some distance, in his ship; the descriptions will therefore be such as the coasts would present at a distant view from the ocean, and not such as they would present on closer actual exploration.

Very well, said the doctor; let us first see what is said about the first land which he approached.

It is in these words, said Mr. Norset: "They perceived that the land was not mountainous, but was covered with wood, and had rising ground in many parts." Now, doctor, you have been upon the ocean, and have approached these shores in the very neighborhood which

---

\* See p. 22, ante, and especially note B, at the end of the volume.

you have determined must correspond to the first point seen by Biarni. I ask you if it were possible to describe more precisely, in so few words, the aspect of Long Island, and of the coasts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts? remembering, as you always must, that before the settlement of this country from England, the whole coast was much more densely wooded than at present.

I cannot say that I could give a better description.

Is this correspondence of the description with the fact, then, think you, one of those happy accidents which the *inventor* of this tale "*chanced to hit upon?*" asked Mr. Norset, pointedly.

The doctor drew down his lip, but answered nothing.

The description of the second land seen is as follows: "They perceived that the land was low and level, and overgrown with wood." Whether this agrees or not, with Nova Scotia, and particularly with the point of Cape Sable, — which Mr. Cassall marked, — will be clear from comparing it with the following description of a modern writer. "Cape Sable, which makes the southwest point into Barrington Bay, is a *low, woody island,*" &c. We shall find descriptions given of this part of the coast by the subsequent northern visitors, who explored it more thoroughly, which, going more into detail, describe other peculiarities of this coast. It must be perceived, however, that the brief account thus given by Biarni agrees, as far it goes, with that of modern navigators. Thus, the writer above quoted, says again, of this coast, "*The land is low in general,* and not visible twenty miles off, except from the quarter-deck of a seventy-four. Aspotogon Hills have a *long, level* appearance. Between Cape Le Have and Port Medway, the coast *to the seaward being level and low* and the shores marked with white rocks, with *low* barren points; from thence, to Shelburne and

Port Roseway, *are woods* ;” \* and another writer observes, “*From Port Haldimand to Cape Sable, the land appears level and low.*”

All this is certainly sufficiently precise, [remarked Mr. Cassall. What is the description of the third land seen, which I marked as Newfoundland ?

“This land was high and mountainous, and covered with ice ;” and “they sailed along the shore till they perceived that this was *an island* ;” and Biarni said that he would not land, “*because the country appeared little inviting.*”

And does this correspond with the descriptions of modern navigators ?

Precisely, as seen *from the sea*. The following is the language of one, — speaking of the harbor of St. John’s, the most prominent point of Newfoundland, — “The most lofty perpendicular precipices rise to an amazing height upon the north side, and the southern shore only appears less striking in its altitude from a comparison with the opposite rocks.” Again, speaking of a headland near St. John’s, he says, “The summit of this majestic headland was now (14th June) covered with snow.” The same writer describes Belle Isle as “a high and barren island. Several tremendous icebergs had grounded beneath its craggy precipices,” &c. The description given by the subsequent northern visitors is the same as that of Biarni, only adding, — which they observed because they landed here, which he did not, — that between these precipices and the sea, was plain rock, whereon no living thing could grow. This is well known to be the fact. Is it, then, necessary to point out the justness of the reason given by Biarni for not land-

---

\* See the various authorities cited, in the *Antiq. Am.* p. 423.

ing, namely, "because the country seemed little inviting?" I need not add that Newfoundland is an island; which, by "sailing round," they would necessarily discover.

Well, doctor, said Mr. Cassall, turning to the doctor, what do you say now, to all these descriptions of the coasts? Are they prodigiously at variance with the fact?

There may be some agreement, perhaps, said the doctor, in no pleasant tone; but I shall yet be able to show the account inconsistent with itself. We have yet to see whether the accounts of the distances sailed in the lengths of time stated, are not what is beyond the possibility of fact.

I had almost forgotten that point, said Mr. Norset; but I think you will make nothing more of it than you have done of any of the others. It can be shown that a day's sailing, with fair wind, was estimated, by the Northmen, at an average of from one hundred and eight, to one hundred and twenty sea miles (English.)

Stay, said the doctor, I think that average too great.

Perhaps, your voyages have been unfortunate, doctor. I know that the last time I crossed the Atlantic, which was in September, 1837, we ran two hundred and twenty knots in one day, which is far beyond the above average.

Very well; apply this average. What is the distance between Cape Cod on the first promontory, to Cape Sable on the second?

It is about two hundred and ten miles. This they made in two days. Nothing is said about the wind except that it was "favorable." We may, therefore, presume it to have been a fair one, but not a very heavy one. This distance coincides with the account, you see, even though you take some miles on either side of each of these points.



And how long were they in sailing from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland ?

Three days ; which allows from three hundred and twenty to three hundred and sixty miles, according to their average ; and we are told that they had a southwest, or directly favorable wind ; so you may take almost any point on the coast of Nova Scotia, and still the distance will correspond.

Doctor, I am afraid you will fail here, again, said Mr. Cassall. You have only one chance left, and that is between Newfoundland and Greenland. If you are lost in that ocean, I know not what will become of you.

Yes ; but I think I shall beat him there, cried the doctor, exultingly. We shall find the time allowed for that sail too short, I am certain.

Do n't be too sure, doctor, said Mr. Norset. I suspect we shall find this very point only a further incidental, but very strong, confirmation of the truth of the whole account. Let us see : the distance between Belle Isle, in Newfoundland, and Greenland, is about six hundred miles. They made the distance in four days, which, according to the average, should give only from four hundred and thirty to four hundred and eighty miles, —

There ! I thought I should catch you there ! cried the doctor, pulling off his spectacles and rubbing them with energy.

Not so fast, doctor. The account particularly specifies, that, during this sail, the wind rose much higher than before, and bore them directly on their course. This would necessarily make them greatly *exceed* the average. If they made sail as fast as we did in the good ship "South America," they would make eight hundred and eighty miles in the four days, which would carry them to Greenland, and nearly half way back again. As of

course, however, they had not such a good vessel, the distance of six hundred miles stated to have been made by them is just about what we might reasonably expect; certainly not *beyond* the mark.

The doctor laid his spectacles on the table, and looked quite blank.

This incidental circumstance, continued Mr. Norset, of an apparent inconsistency at first sight, and real accuracy and consistency, when examined, is a remarkable and exceedingly strong instance of that "oblique" coincidence which Paley mentions as so important in internal evidence, and which serves, more than any thing else, to testify to the truth of a narrative. It is fair to say, that such a coincidence *could not* have crept into a fabrication or a forgery.

I must say, remarked Mr. Cassall, that I cannot see how any reasonable or candid person can entertain the slightest doubt of the truth and perfect authenticity of this narrative. I never remember to have seen or read any such brief account, which contained such a mass of internal evidence, or the internal evidence of the truth of which was stronger, if so strong.

You may indeed say, observed Mr. Norset,—"*if so strong*;" for we find confirmation at every step.

It is then established beyond doubt, said Mr. Cassall, that Biarni Heriulfson discovered the continent of North America in the year 985; that was, I think, the year in which it was stated that Eirek the Red, with Heriulf and others, finally settled in Greenland.

It was so; and Biarni reached Iceland just after his father had left, and immediately followed him, reaching Greenland at the end of the same summer.

After all, at length, remarked the doctor, I do n't see that very much credit is due to this Biarni Heriulfson.

It was only by accident, by mere chance, to make the best of it, that he discovered these shores.

That is right, doctor; that is right. It would be a pity to grant him any credit for the discovery. Biarni sailed from Iceland in search of Greenland, — a land unknown to him, which he had never seen. He traversed boldly an unknown ocean in the search for it. He discovered, on his way, another, and totally unknown and unimagined land. And what did Colon do? He went in search of a land which was well known. It was Asia which he sought, and Asia alone whose eastern shores he believed, to his dying hour, that he had discovered. He sought, however, to approach it by a different route. He traversed, too, an unknown ocean, but with far more advantageous circumstances than Biarni; for he had the compass to guide him, and ships well appointed for a distant and dangerous voyage. Neither of these aids accompanied Biarni. Colon, too, on his way, touched upon another land, though he imagined that it was the land he sought. Did you never deem that any credit was due to him, I pray? Was there ever a discovery made in this world, the first idea of which was not derived from what you are pleased to call *accident*?

The doctor did not seem disposed to make any reply to these remarks and interrogatories. After a short pause, Mr. Cassall inquired: —

What followed, on the arrival of Biarni in Greenland? You have led us to anticipate several voyages, subsequently undertaken, for the purpose of exploring the regions thus discovered. I presume they originated in the reports of Biarni.

The narrative proceeds to inform us\* that Biarni subsequently visited Eirek, one of the Jarls or princes of Nor-

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 26.

way. The date of this event we can ascertain pretty nearly, by reference to other facts. We have seen that Biarni remained with his father till the death of the latter, which, from the mode in which the fact is mentioned, we must conclude to have been some years later. Again, we subsequently learn that Leif, the son of Eirek, bought the ship in which Biarni returned to Greenland, and went himself to Vinland, in the year 1000. This could not have been long after Biarni's return from Norway, as the ship would not improve by lying on the strand. We gather, moreover, some light from the page of external history, in this matter. The Eirek Jarl, whom Biarni visited, could be no other than Eirek, son of Hakon Jarl, which latter was killed in the year 995, and a monarch, of a different family, elected. It may be safely determined, then, that the voyage of Biarni to Norway took place about the year 995.

How does Biarni's visit to Norway bear upon the matter before us?

It bears directly upon it; for we are told that the relations which Biarni gave, while in Norway, of the circumstances of his voyage excited much interest and curiosity, and that he was much blamed for not having explored with greater care the newly-discovered lands. It happened, as we shall presently see, that Leif, the son of Eirek the Red, visited; about that time, namely, in the year 999, Olaf, king of Norway. Either the interest excited in his mind, while in Greenland, was rekindled here, and his determination made to explore the unknown lands; or he now first heard the particulars, having been too young, at the time of Biarni's arrival in Greenland, to understand or feel interested in his adventures. The latter was probably the case, as he must have been a mere child when Eirek, his father, passed over to

Greenland, which was in the same year in which Biarni arrived there. However this may be, certain it is, that, on his return to Greenland, "Leif, the son of Eirek," in the words of the narrative, "had an interview with Biarni Heriulfson, and bought of him his ship, which he fitted out, and manned with thirty-five men."

At what date was this?

We learn, from collating other accounts with the one we are now pursuing,\* that it was in the same year in which Christianity was introduced into Iceland; namely, the year 1000.

By the by, you noticed that there was a passage previously occurring in the narrative, and relating to Leif, which you passed over as out of place. What did it contain?

It states that, fourteen years † after Eirek the Red had gone to Greenland, (that is, A. D. 999) Leif, his eldest son, went to Norway, where he was hospitably entertained by king Olaf. This king was a zealous Christian, and, as the narrative states, "exhorted him, as he did all pagans who came to him, to embrace Christianity. To which request Leif consented without any difficulty; and he and all his sailors were baptized."

---

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* pp. 15, 26, 113, 191, 193, &c. External history may again be brought in aid; for this king Olaf (Tryggvason) only reigned from 995 to 1000, in which latter year he was killed. The authentic history of the northern nations serves very much to illustrate and prove the authenticity and truth of the documents contained in the *Antiq. Am.* It might have been well, if the editor of that volume had deduced illustrations from it. The instances above given show how effectually it may be done, and other instances will be introduced.

† See *Antiq. Am.* p. 15, note 3, the correctness of which will be rendered evident from collating the different passages mentioned in last note.

There had, then, been no attempt at the introduction of Christianity into Greenland before this time ?

None : Leif was the first who introduced Christianity into Greenland. We find a particular account of this transaction in the other principal narrative, — the “account of Thorfinn,” — which is confirmed by other extracts in this volume.\* In that narrative, however, the voyage of Leif to this continent is merely glanced at, while —

Stop a moment, cried the doctor ; how do you explain the circumstance, that the narrative of his voyage is so slightly passed over in the “account of Thorfinn,” — though detailed at full length in the “account of Eirek the Red,” — while the account of his introduction of Christianity into Greenland is detailed so fully in the former, though only his own conversion is mentioned in the latter ?

That is not difficult to explain, doctor. I have already shown you, that it is probable that the individual who first committed to writing the “account of Thorfinn,” was one of the bishops, the descendants of that man. Of course he would feel a particular interest in matters relating to the progress of his church, especially in a sister colony ; and the intercourse between Norway and Iceland being more frequent and close than that between Norway and Greenland, he would have greater access to the means of information as to the details of Leif’s visit, and of his persuasion, by Olaf, to introduce Christianity into Greenland. The non-statement of the introduction of Christianity into Greenland, in this part of the “account of Eirek,” is a matter of no surprise. The author was treating of a different topic. We shall, however, find the fact of that introduction mentioned elsewhere in this account. These diversities in the two accounts, — neither of which contradicts

---

\* See places cited in note to previous page.

the other, but each of which, on the contrary, confirms the other as far as it goes, but is, in some points, more, in others less, full in its details, — is but another proof of the authenticity of all the documents and truth of the whole narratives, since it shows that the different narratives were compiled without concert, or the author of one having any knowledge of the contents of the other. It is to be observed, that the “account of Thorfinn” gives much the fuller details of all points connected with the introduction and propagation of Christianity. Its authorship, as before stated, explains the cause of this.

Upon my word, said the doctor, you will not allow me to find a single flaw in the narrative.

It really is uncharitable, is it not? How happy you would be doctor, if you could find one. However, I was about to observe that full details of the voyages of the sons of Eirek the Red are contained in the “account of Eirek.” It is not to be supposed that the narrator of the exploits of Thorfinn troubled himself much with those of others, or knew much about the family of Eirek, which had quitted Iceland so long before. Hence the paucity of particulars contained in it, concerning Eirek and his sons. They are only given with any detail, in the points connected in any way with Thorfinn. Hence, as we shall see, the somewhat detailed account of Thorstein, Eirek’s youngest son, the first husband of Gudrid, who subsequently became the wife of Thorfinn.

Will you now proceed with the narrative? asked Mr. Cassall.

Yes; let us hear what is further to be said: I dare say we shall detect some inconsistencies and contradictions here, at any rate, said the doctor.

We proceed, then, next, to the NARRATIVE OF THE

EXPEDITION OF LEIF. Pray keep your eyes and ears about you, doctor, to detect all inconsistencies.

Leif, we are told, purchased the vessel of Biarni, and manned it with a crew of thirty-five. "He requested his father Eirek to become the leader of the expedition. Eirek excused himself on the score of his advanced age, saying that he could ill bear the fatigues and dangers of the voyage. Leif urged that the constant good fortune of his family would attend him. Eirek yielded to this appeal, and, when all was ready, rode down on horseback to the vessel, which lay at but a short distance from his residence. The horse on which Eirek rode, stumbled,—whereby Eirek was thrown, and injured his foot. Then he said, "Fortune will not permit me to discover more lands than this which we inhabit; I will proceed no further with you." Eirek then returned home, to Brattahlid. Leif, with his thirty-five companions, went on board. Among them was a man from the south country, (that is, a German,) named *Tyrker*.

"All being now ready, they set sail, and the first land to which they came was that last seen by Biarni."

How did they know that? asked the doctor.

I am surprised you should ask such a question, replied Mr. Norset. Had not Leif purchased Biarni's vessel? and is it not most probable that he was accompanied by some of Biarni's former companions? Besides, Biarni had described the lands which he had seen, and their situation, and it is obvious that Leif would gather all the information from him that he could, and that he would make direct for the land described as being nearest to Greenland. But Leif himself describes the aspect of the land very precisely, and you shall judge for yourself of its correctness, as applied to Newfoundland. It corresponds, most exactly, with the description, as far as it



goes, of Biarni, though, also, with the more particular descriptions given by all modern explorers of that region.

“They make direct for land, cast anchor, and put out a boat—”

They had some more curiosity than Biarni, then, said Mr. Cassall, notwithstanding the land was so uninviting.

They went out expressly for the purpose of exploring, you must remember, observed Mr. Norset.

“—Having landed, they found no herbage. All above were frozen heights; and the whole space between these and the sea was occupied by bare flat rocks; whence they judged this to be a barren land. Then said Leif, ‘we will not do as Biarni did, who never set foot on shore: I will give a name to this land, and will call it HELLULAND,’ (that is, land of broad stones.)

“After this they put out to sea, and came to another land,—”

I suppose, remarked Mr. Cassall, that they would make direct for the second headland seen by Biarni; that is, Nova Scotia.

One may almost say, answered Mr. Norset, that of course they would do so.

“Of course,” nothing of the kind, said the doctor; why should they “of course” do so?

For an obvious reason, replied Mr. Norset: they went out for the express purpose of exploring the lands seen by Biarni. They received from him, as we are informed in the narrative, accounts of these, as seen by him. They would naturally obtain from him all the information which they could, and steer their course, as nearly as possible, in the same track which he had sailed. Thus the three headlands which he had successively seen and described, would be seen successively by them. Moreover, it would be almost impossible for them to sail

along the ocean in that direction, without falling; in succession, upon these three promontories.

This may be all very well for you to argue, but, if you have no other proof that it was the same land, I will take this argument as worth very little.

It fortunately happens then, doctor, for the satisfaction of all such unreasonable sceptics as yourself, that we are able, most completely, to identify the land thus seen, with the shores of Nova Scotia. The narrative continues:—“They approached the shore, and, having cast anchor, put out a boat, and set foot ashore. *This land was low and level, and covered with wood;*”—thus agreeing, you see, precisely with Biarni’s description of the land. But there was this difference: Leif landed, and saw and examined the shore with closer inspection; Biarni saw it only at a distance. We may therefore expect some more minute particulars to be given in this case, as in the case of Newfoundland, by Leif, than by Biarni. Accordingly, Leif not only saw that the land was low, and covered with wood, but adds,—“in many places where they explored, there were white sands, and a gradual rise of the coast.” These white sands, on the shores of Nova Scotia, are noticed by all the authors whom I have already quoted, and by all travellers who have examined and described those coasts. In a passage which I quoted before, we saw that certain *hills* have a “long, level appearance,” as seen from the ocean: when the spectator landed, he would necessarily see that they were rising ground. Can any description be more precisely accurate? and yet carrying, in the very circumstance of its greater fullness than that of Biarni, evidence of the authenticity and truth of each part of the narrative, since we learn that each saw the coasts under different circumstances; that difference being precisely

such as would occasion this difference in the description of the aspect.

I tell you what, said the doctor; these descriptions are *too accurate*.\* I am sure that this is all a fabrication.

*Too accurate!* what do you mean, doctor? you surely are not in earnest?

Yes, but I am. I say that the descriptions are too accurate, and that they therefore show that the whole is a fabrication.

*Too accurate!* well, I never heard of any thing being too accurate before. Do you think the Northmen could not see? or that they must necessarily walk backwards, or hold their heads between their knees, or some other strange antic, that they should be unable to see correctly, and afterwards describe what they saw? There is nothing so very difficult, either to remember or describe, in *low and woody, and white sand hills*. Really, doctor, I must say that I never did hear such an absurd objection in the whole course of my life. *Too accurate!!* Doctor, do you know in what year Rome was founded?

To be sure I do; 753 B. C. What has that to do with it?

Wait a minute, and you shall see. Do you know in what year Troy was taken?

I hope so; 1184 B. C. But I never knew that the Trojans were Northmen, before.

You don't say so, doctor! but do you know in what year the Olympiads began to be reckoned?

776 B. C.

\* An objection so absurd as this would not have been noticed here, but that it has been raised by one of the reviews. The author is not sure which review has thus distinguished itself by its superior sagacity, but believes, as far as memory will serve, that it was the *Foreign Quarterly*.

I tell you what, doctor, said Mr. Norset then, very gravely; I can see you know nothing at all about ancient history, for you are much "*too accurate.*"

The doctor looked quite confounded; while Mr. Cassall burst into a loud laugh, and exclaimed:—

Ha! ha! ha! that is good; that serves you right, doctor. I am sure it would be much more difficult for you or me, or any one else of common capacity, to remember even these three dates accurately, than to remember the appearances of these lands, and to describe them in the short and simple, but correct manner in which these descriptions have been given in the narrative, or any other descriptions that we have yet had;—

Or shall have, added Mr. Norset. I certainly never heard of such an objection as this before. If it was any body else but the doctor, I should certainly say that it argued only a want of candor, and a determination to cavil, where no rational grounds of doubt could be found to exist. If we had long, labored descriptions, you might, indeed, under some circumstances, talk of their being *too accurate* to be authentic; but that is not the case here; we have just, and only, a few simple remarks in the same plain and unostentatious style as all the rest of the narrative,—bearing about it, in its very simplicity, the evidence of truth,—in which remarks is contained a very brief notice of the most striking external features only of each spot. There is nothing artificial, nothing labored, and, unless you suppose that the Northmen were incapable of seeing, of distinguishing high from low, white from black, why, such an objection as "*too accurate*" is devoid even of rationality, much less ingenuity.

Don't be too severe upon the doctor, said Mr. Cassall, laughing.

I don't want to be severe upon him, but I certainly

can with little patience, hear all sorts of objections thrown out, merely for the sake of objections and of impeaching the credit of an authentic, a *proved authentic*, narrative;—for the authenticity of this narrative has been already completely proved. The absurdity of such an objection, and of inferring from it that these narratives are fabrications, becomes more glaring when you remember that it is, at any rate, *positively certain*, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the *identical manuscripts* from which these narratives are printed, so that interpolation is impossible, were written some centuries before the expeditions of Colon; before the time, therefore, when, *unless* the narratives be true, it would have been *possible* to describe these shores at all. In saying, then, that the descriptions are *too accurate* for truth, a complicated absurdity is involved, which destroys itself by assuming more than is *physically possible*; which, therefore, must be rather more *improbable* than that these narratives are true.

The doctor, during all this discourse, made no remark. He rolled his eyes from one object to another, apparently taking consolation in the folds of his own self-complacency.

The very circumstance, continued Mr. Norset, of the difference between the descriptions of Leif and those of Biarni, the two agreeing precisely as far as they go, but that of Leif being more full, since he landed, and Biarni did not, is, as I have before said, of itself evidence of the truth of the whole narrative. These observations will apply as well to the descriptions which follow, as to those which we have already heard.

Let us now, then, proceed with the narrative, said Mr. Cassall.

“The land was low and covered with wood: in many

places where they explored, there were white sands, with a gradual rise of the shore. Then said Leif, 'This land shall take its name from that which most abounds here. It shall be called MARKLAND,' (that is, land of woods.) They then reëmbarked as quickly as possible. They put out to sea, and sailed for two days, with a northeast wind, till they again came in sight of land."

This, I suppose, observed Mr. Cassall, was the same that Biarni first saw, namely, the promontory formed by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Obviously so; you observe that Leif was two days, with a northeast wind, in sailing from Nova Scotia hither, as Biarni was two days, with a southwest wind, in sailing hence to Nova Scotia. We must expect, however, that Leif would not merely take a distant view of the land, but would inspect it more closely, and give us more full particulars, as he has done in each previous case. Accordingly, thus the narrative proceeds: — "They came again in sight of land, approaching which, they touched upon an island lying opposite to the northeasterly\* part of the main land. Here they landed, and found the air remarkably pleasant. They observed the grass covered with much dew. When they touched this accidentally, and raised the hand to the mouth, they perceived a sweetness which they had not before noticed."

Surely, interposed Mr. Cassall, this island must be Nantucket. I know that honey-dew is found there,† for I have seen it myself; but that island hardly lies opposite to the northeasterly part of the main land.

Looking at the map, it does not appear to lie to the northward of Cape Cod, answered Mr. Norset; but you

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* p. 30 and 428.

† Cf. p. 413, of *Antiq. Am.*; in addition to which the author has the testimony of residents in Nantucket to the same fact.

will remember that Leif put out to sea from Nova Scotia, and sailed with a northeast or northeast by east wind. The first land he saw would be *the most prominent point of Cape Cod towards the east*, which you will immediately perceive to be the neighborhood of *Chatham Beach*, immediately opposite to which Nantucket lies. This point of the land would necessarily appear to, and be considered by, him as the northerly or northeasterly point of the main land. You will presently see that he subsequently entered Nantucket Bay, and sailed on through Vineyard Sound, to do which, he must necessarily have gone in a more or less southerly direction *from the point of the main land* opposite to Nantucket, which point is Chatham or Monomoy Beach. He might, therefore, justly describe this island as lying *opposite to the northerly or northeasterly part of the main land*. Leif appears never to have seen or explored the northwestern tongue of Cape Cod. He gives no description of it, as the subsequent navigators do; and, coming in, as he did, from the open sea, and from the northeast, it is not probable that he would see it, or that, if he did, he would observe its characteristics. He made for the most prominent headland, which must necessarily have been the extreme eastern point of the peninsula of Barnstable, or Cape Cod.\* I must observe, however, that the coast in this region has undergone changes, since the time in which these expeditions were made, by the action of the Gulf Stream, as I shall have occasion to show more particularly by and by.† It is most probable, indeed almost certain, that the extreme eastern part of the promontory

---

\* See note, p. 78, to which attention is here again called, in order to avoid the possibility of misapprehension.

† See the next chapter, in treating of *Straumfiord*.

existed formerly more prominent than at present, and that several islands lay to the eastward of Nantucket as well as of the main land. We find many large shoals in each of these situations at the present day, which are daily becoming less. It might have been on one of these islands that Leif touched, and the point to which it was opposite would be still more to the northeast than Chatham Beach. This probability renders the passage we are discussing still clearer, although there is in the facts, as at present existing, no contradiction to the account given in the narrative. I must remark that this explanation affords another important instance of the valuable "oblique coincidence," and becomes, therefore, another internal evidence of the truth of the whole narrative.

Well, observed the doctor, it is the being an island opposite the main land, and finding honey-dew there, that seems to identify this spot with Nantucket; but I should like to see some more evidence of its identity before I feel quite satisfied on the point.

You will have that presently, doctor, and so strong that it will be impossible any longer to doubt that it must have been either Nantucket, or one of the at present partially submerged islands which lie to the eastward or northeastward of Nantucket. One thing more, however, I must observe, before we continue the narrative, and that is, that Biarni came within sight of this promontory after having been driven down southwest from the open northern sea. He would, therefore, necessarily see the country more in the aspect in which you would see it in sailing up from New York to Halifax (N. B.) outside Long Island, and his description of the country is most exactly corresponding to the aspect of it as thus seen, "not mountainous, but well wooded, and with many elevations." Leif, on the contrary, sailed direct southwest



from Nova Scotia, and would, therefore, necessarily see it, as you would see it in sailing from Halifax to New York; in which case, the eastern point of Cape Cod, or the island of Nantucket, would first strike the eye.

Certainly, said Mr. Cassall, the direction in which they came makes some difference.

To proceed with the narrative: "Returning to their ship, they sailed through a bay which lay between the island and a promontory \* running towards the north-east," — obviously Nantucket Bay, between Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard on the one side, and Cape Cod on the other, — "and directing their course westward, they *passed beyond* this promontory." They would perceive, immediately on passing the mouth of Buzzard's Bay, that the land they had just passed was a promontory: they had already seen its northeastern extremity. "In this bay, when the tide was low, there were *shallows left, of very great extent.*" Is it possible for any description to be more peculiarly characteristic of the whole coast of this bay, both on the side of the islands and on that of Cape Cod? About Nantucket, especially, these shoals could hardly have failed to attract the attention of the most careless. I should think that this is specific enough to satisfy even the doctor. I have, moreover, the testimony of one of the oldest inhabitants of Nantucket, that these shoals were formerly even more extensive than at present.

Go on, said the doctor, looking round him with an air of great complacency.

---

\* The term used in the original is *ness*, which signifies any *projection* or *jutting out* of land into the sea, and might, therefore, properly be applied by them to this land, although they were ignorant of its being an actual narrow strip of land. See, as to the use of this term, *ness*, in chap. 3.

“So great was the desire of the men to land, that, without waiting for the high tide to carry them nearer, they went ashore, at a place where a river poured out of a lake. When the tide rose, they took their boat and rowed back to the ship, and passed first up the river, and then into the lake.”

And what do you presume to be the locality of this description? asked the doctor.

You must satisfy yourself about that point, by examining the maps of Massachusetts and Rhode Island \* carefully, and collating them with the narrative. We are told that they had “passed beyond” the neck of land. They had passed, therefore, beyond the peninsula of Cape Cod, and the mouth of Buzzard’s Bay. Then they came to land at a place where a river flowed out of a lake. In order to ascertain what river this is, we must observe the incidents. It was a river which could be sailed up, in one of their large merchant vessels, at high tide, and the lake navigated by the same vessel. It must have been a river of some, though no great length, from the expression employed, that they “*passed up the river, and thence into the lake,*” — which clearly indicates that they went up some distance.

It appears to me, answered Mr. Cassall, after a short time, that they must have passed up *Seaconnet Passage*,

---

\* In order to render the geography of these parts, which is important to the present subject, more clear, an accurate map of Massachusetts and Rhode Island has been added, exhibiting all the localities to which allusion is here made. In all common atlases, these coasts are remarkably inaccurate. That of the U. K. Society, published in London, is by far the best; superior to any published in America. That atlas also gives a very good map of Greenland, which scarcely any other atlas gives in more than the rudest form. All the modern settlements, subsequently mentioned, will be found in this map of Greenland.

and *Pocasset River*, and thus into *Mount Hope Bay*. The description of all the parts corresponds exactly with the actual condition of these localities. Mount Hope Bay is, in truth, a lake, with a river passing through it, one of whose courses towards the sea, is on the east, the other on the west side of the island of Rhode Island. Leif appears to have taken, — as he naturally would do, coming to it first, and being unacquainted with the geography of the neighborhood, — the eastern course, and to have passed up *Pocasset River*. *Pocasset River* is, I believe, only navigable at high tide,\* on account of the sandy shoals which lie in its bed.

Your conclusion is the one to which, I think, every one must come, said Mr. Norset. It must be remembered, too, that it can be geologically proved that all the shoals in this neighborhood were, at the date referred to in this narrative, more extensive than at present, and the coasts of Rhode Island and Seaconnet, and the whole bed of the *Pocasset river*, are, even now, shoaly. Leif and his companions might well be impatient, then, at the distance from shore at which they were compelled to cast anchor, and at the obstruction to their passing up the river till high tide. There can certainly be no doubt as to this locality. What says the doctor on the subject?

O, said the doctor, you may take them up what rivers and lakes you please. I suppose I must take it all just as you give it to me.

What exemplary resignation! said Mr. Norset, laughing: — something like the Frenchman's celebrated declaration, "I *will* be drowned, for nobody *shall* save me." But let us proceed: —

"Having cast anchor" in the lake, "they disem-

---

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* p. 432.

barked, and erected temporary habitations. Having subsequently determined, however, to remain there during the winter, they built more permanent dwellings. Both in the river and in the lake, there was a great abundance of salmon, and of greater size than they had before seen."

I know, said Mr. Cassall, that salmon is caught there; and it is well known that the abundance was formerly very much greater than at present. Indeed, it was formerly so great that there existed, a few years ago, a regulation in some of the towns in that neighborhood, that no master should *feed his apprentices on salmon, more than twice a week!* The fish was so cheap that the apprentices got scarcely any thing else.

A very proper regulation, and confirmatory of the truth of this narrative. To proceed:—

"So great was the goodness of the land,"—you will remember the comparatively sterile regions of Iceland and Greenland which they had left,—“that they conceived that cattle would be able to find provender in winter, none of that intense cold occurring to which they were accustomed in their own country, and the grass not withering very much.”

What is that? said the doctor.

I thought the doctor would catch at this, said Mr. Norset, with a smile: the winters, doctor, they found them not severe.

Not severe! I am sure they have them severe enough at Boston now, and I do n't suppose they were much milder in the days of the Northmen than now.

Very likely not, doctor; all this may be very true,\*

---

\* It is worthy of observation, however, that it is highly probable the winters in general were milder in New England, at the period alluded to, than at present. The reason of this will be immediately

and yet there be no inconsistency in this account, but, on the contrary, a greater evidence of authenticity than any other mode of statement could have been, in its being one of the "*oblique coincidences*" of Paley, and one which *could not* have been found in a fabrication. Do you think the winters are ever so cold, even at Boston, as they are in Greenland and Iceland?

Why, no, I suppose not.

Well, then, of course these Northmen could only speak from comparison. These winters were mild to them, comparatively with the winters to which they were accustomed. Moreover, the winters in Rhode Island are seldom, or never, so severe as in Massachusetts, — owing to the peculiar situation of that tract of country, and to its openness on all sides to the benefit of the sea breezes, whence it derives almost the same advantage, in temperature, from the circumfluence of the ocean, that an island in the same latitude would do. I have been informed, by those well and long acquainted with this State, that there seldom falls enough snow here to admit of sleighing, which is so common in Massachusetts, and that very frequently the dust is flying in the streets of Providence, while the snow lies so deep and solid in Boston and the neighborhood, — these two cities lying within forty miles of each other, — that sleighing is actually going forward there. But even in many parts of Massachusetts, cattle are not necessarily or universally, even now, housed in winter. Thus, in this very volume,

---

Obvious upon reference to the facts already detailed, concerning the descent of arctic ice. (See p. 61.) It is undoubted that the climate of Iceland and Greenland has become more severe from this cause, and it would seem that the influence of the same cause must necessarily extend to this region of the continent.

p. 368, we have the following public testimony of one well acquainted with these districts of the country, — and who rendered considerable and valuable assistance to the Antiquarian Society of Copenhagen, in one part of these investigations.\* Speaking of the neighborhood of Mount Hope Bay, he says ; — “ Most winters a scanty subsistence might be procured by cattle ; but this is not depended upon. Farmers generally house their cattle in winter ; but whether this was formerly the case, cannot say. We do not consider it absolutely necessary, though a prudent husbandman will do it.” If, under any circumstances, it can now be considered as *not absolutely necessary*, can we wonder that the Northmen, coming from the bleak and sterile regions of Iceland and Greenland, and being by no means such “ good husbandmen ” as our present farmers, imagined it unnecessary ? This gentleman proceeds : “ Some individuals in that vicinity do not shelter their sheep, and say they thrive well, and become robust. On the island of Nantucket, east of Martha’s Vineyard, one of the most bleak, sterile, and, to the agriculturist, forbidding spots we have, *the sheep are not, and have not been, since its first settlement, housed or protected in any manner whatever.* In the Narraganset country, situated west of the bay, sheep are sometimes kept in the open air through the winter season.” You will observe that the narrative does not state that the grass remained uninjured. It simply states that it was not *much* injured, — that is, of course, comparatively with what it was in their own country. We shall find, subsequently, that one winter passed here, was severe even to the Northmen.

It certainly is impossible, observed Mr. Cassall, to de-

---

\* Dr. THOMAS WEBB, formerly of Providence, now of Boston.

ny the justness and propriety and force of your remarks as to the winter. The points you have alluded to being remembered, there is nothing like an inconsistency in the narrative. On the contrary, it becomes, as you remarked, a strong case of "oblique coincidence," and affords, therefore, another internal testimony of the truth of the whole narrative. What follows this account of the winter season?

We come next to an important observation, though occurring merely incidentally, in speaking of the winter. It enables us to fix positively the latitude of the country thus visited; and by it all our previous conclusions are verified and confirmed.

Pray, what is that? exclaimed the doctor, with no slight expression of surprise.

"The equality in the length of the days was greater there than in Greenland or Iceland. On the shortest day the sun remained above the horizon from half past seven in the morning till half past four in the afternoon."

Half past seven and half past four! said the doctor; why, these Northmen did n't calculate time as we do.

No, answered Mr. Norset, but they calculated in a manner as exact.

Pray, what was that? asked Mr. Cassall.

They divided the day into eight portions, each of which they called an *eykt*. Each *eykt* was distinguished by a particular name; and there were two points in one day in the year, (the first day of winter,) which were anciently distinguished by two particular names, (*eyktarstad* and *dagmalastad*,) which names indicated the points of time at which, on that particular day of the year, the sun set and rose in one of the principal places in \* Ice-

---

\* See Antiq. Am. p. 435, note b, and the authorities there cited. It must be observed that this elucidation of the mean-

land. These terms were sometimes, as in the case before us, employed as designative of those particular points of time in the day, (namely, half past four, and half past seven,) in an arbitrary sense, applied to any day in the year. The passage before us may, then, be correctly paraphrased as follows:—"On the shortest day in Vinland, the sun rose and set at the same time that it rises and sets on the 17th of October at Skalholt, in Iceland." This time is half past seven in the morning, and half past four in the afternoon. Now the sun can only rise and set precisely at half past seven and half past four, on the shortest day, in latitude  $41^{\circ} 24' 10''$ , which you will immediately perceive to be almost exactly that of Mount Hope Bay. As of course the Northmen did not make their observations to the minuteness of a few seconds, this slight variation in latitude is obviously no inconsistency.

How did they contrive to measure time in those days? they had no clocks and watches.

That cannot be determined. It is certain that they had some means, and very exact ones, too, of measuring time. What they were is not known. It would, however, be no difficult matter, without the aid of instruments, to compare the length of the day and night, and observe with what part of the year, in Iceland, this proportion, on the shortest day in Vinland, agreed. There can be little doubt, however, that they had some kind of sun-dial, — an instrument much more ancient and correct

---

ing of the terms *eyktarstad* and *dagmalastad* has been made by parties who were in no way interested in supporting, and had no reference to, the remarkable confirmation given by this passage to the conclusions which have been drawn, as to the locality of Vinland, from the previous points of this narration. It is the elucidation in which the great majority of Scandinavian scholars are agreed.



than the clock, though not so convenient. It is well worthy of observation here, that the cause which led Torfœus, — copied by Malte Brun, Pinkerton, and others, — to fix on Newfoundland as the locality of *Vinland*, as I mentioned yesterday, was the misinterpretation of this very passage. He took eight and four as the two hours, instead of half past seven and half past four. The consequence was, that he fixed on latitude 49, instead of 41, — which former is that of Newfoundland. This error, *and its cause*, are well exposed, in a long extract given from the works of a disinterested party, in the volume before us.\* It is singular that, with descriptions of the country before him, every line of which belied the locality of Newfoundland, Torfœus should have fallen into this error; especially, too, when the very fact of mention being made of the *contrast between the equality of days in Vinland, and their inequality in Iceland and Greenland*, would seem, of itself, to imply a *greater equality* and contrast than the length of days in Newfoundland presents. The circumstance of his falling into this error is, however, evidence of the absence of all desire to bend one fact into support of another, where their connection is not obvious.

That observation about the length of the shortest day is, certainly, said the doctor, the most satisfactory means of settling the locality.

I hardly know, said Mr. Norset, whether it is, in reality, more precise or satisfactory than that afforded by the other points of the narrative, when these are carefully examined. It certainly is most satisfactory to find the conclusions, derived from these other sources, *confirmed* by this observation. But, to proceed with our narrative: —

---

\* Antiq. Am. note to p. 435.

“Their dwellings being completed, Leif said to his companions, — ‘I propose that our numbers be divided into two companies, for I wish to explore the country; each one of these companies shall, alternately, remain at home, and go out exploring. Let the exploring party, however, never go further than that they may return home the same evening; neither let them separate one from another.’ It was so arranged. Leif himself, on alternate days, went out exploring and remained at home. Leif was a man strong and of great stature, of dignified aspect, wise and moderate in all things.

“It happened, one evening, that one of the company was missing. This was Tyrker the German. Leif felt much concerned, for Tyrker had lived with him and his father for a long time, and had been very fond of Leif in his childhood; wherefore Leif severely blamed his comrades, and went himself, with twelve others, to seek the man. When they had gone but a short distance from the dwelling, Tyrker met them, to their no small joy. Leif soon perceived that Tyrker had not his usual manner. He was (naturally) erect in countenance, his eyes constantly rolling, his face hollow, his stature short, his body spare, and he was possessed of great skill in every kind of smith’s work. Then said Leif to him, ‘Why have you staid out so late, friend, and separated yourself from your companions?’ For some time Tyrker gave no answer, except in German, and rolled his eyes (as usual) here and there, and twisted his mouth. They could not understand what he said. After some time he spoke in the Norse language, and said, ‘I have not been much further, but I have something new to tell you; I have found vines and grapes.’ ‘Is this true?’ asked Leif. ‘Yes, indeed it is,’ answered he; ‘I was brought up in a land where there was abundance of vines and grapes.’”

A pretty fellow Tyrker was, said the doctor, to play such antics because he had found a few grapes.

I suppose, observed Mr. Cassall, that it was so long since he had seen or tasted this delicious fruit, which, in his younger days, he had known so well, that, when he unexpectedly fell in with it here, he was almost as much intoxicated with joy, as, under other circumstances, he might have been with the generous juice of that same fruit.

Intoxicated! repeated the doctor, catching at the word, intoxicated with fresh grapes! No, no, that will not quite do; nobody was ever yet intoxicated with fresh grapes: some inconsistency here, Mr. Norset.\*

I did not say "intoxicated with grapes," interrupted Mr. Cassall; I said "almost as much intoxicated with joy, as if he had been drinking the generous juice." I merely used the word "*intoxicated*," as applying to both cases,—joy and wine. I see nothing in the narrative which intimates that he was intoxicated with any thing else than joy.

But the doctor had got hold of too good an idea, in his own opinion, to give it up so easily, and went on repeating,—intoxicated with fresh grapes! intoxicated with fresh grapes!

At length Mr. Norset replied to this ejaculation in the following manner:—

Really, doctor, I hardly know what crotchet you have got into your head now, but it is one for which the nar-

---

\* An objection like this, which is totally unjustified by any expression in the original, would not have been inserted and answered here, but that it was, on one occasion, made to the author in conversation; and some misapprehension may arise, in some minds, as to the cause of Tyrker's talking in German, and expressing such joy at finding grapes.

rative certainly does not give you the slightest handle. What are the facts? Tyrker was a native of a country where vines abounded; he had been, therefore, in his youth, well acquainted with their delicious fruit. But the last twenty years, or more, of his life had been passed in the north country, where vines grew not, and their fruit, unless imported, was unknown. He little expected to meet with vines again in this expedition, and, when he did so, he was naturally delighted. He gathered the delicious fruit and eat it, and what a gush of feeling would rush across his mind as he did so! He would be transported back, by association, to his native land, where he had last seen vines and gathered grapes. He would forget his companions and their country for the time, and all would again seem *German*. It is not only, then, *not singular*, but it is a remarkable testimony to the truth of this narrative, that we are told that, when Leif and his companions approached, Tyrker at first answered their inquiries in *German*. We see here the simple operation of natural association within him. No fabrication could have been so true to nature. At first sight, it may not strike the mind, but, when examined, this becomes a truly interesting, as well as remarkable case of "oblique coincidence;" an instance which *could not have been designed*. It shows the plain simplicity of truth with which the whole narrative is told. There was no sign of intoxication about Tyrker. He exhibited unusual joy, and he twisted his mouth, as many thousands have done since, at the thought of a delicious morsel. He soon recalled his wandering memory, and answered in Norse, and in a straightforward, simple manner, showing Leif that he had the means of knowing vines from weeds, and grapes from berries. How much was generally thought of this discovery of vines, we shall presently see, when

we find that the country was named from the circumstance ; and that, on a subsequent expedition, one party came out expressly because he was told of the vines, and went back in dudgeon because he did not find them so soon as he expected.

Well, well, said the doctor, I suppose I must give it up as usual ; but are vines found wild in that part of the country ?

Why, doctor, said Mr. Norset, have you been in this neighborhood so little as not to know that vines grow wild, in great abundance, in many parts ? I could show you some magnificent specimens of vines, gathered from the woods, not far from here. In many accounts of these regions it is expressly stated that a " great abundance " of vines are found wild in this neighborhood ; many of which produce very fine fruit, as I myself know from positive personal experience. And whence do you think *Martha's Vineyard*, and *Vineyard Sound*, took their names, but from the profusion of vines found on the island and adjoining coasts ? This is *expressly recorded* to have been the fact by the first settlers in those parts. I have, moreover, the testimony of residents in Blackstone Valley, in the immediate neighborhood of Mount Hope Bay, that vines are found wild in great abundance in that valley, many of them producing good fruit.

Well, said the doctor, I have never been nearer to this part than Boston before, and I did not know that vines were so common.

This vine story is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of the whole narrative, observed Mr. Cassall.

It is, indeed, said Mr. Norset. In fact, every line of the narrative confirms and strengthens the authenticity and truth of every other, and of the whole. We only accumulate evidence as we advance. We now approach

the conclusion of the narrative of Leif's expedition. The account proceeds:—"They passed this night in sleep. On the following morning Leif said to his companions,—'There are two matters now to be attended to, on alternate days,—to gather grapes, or (as a means of saving time and trouble) cut down vines, and to fell timber with which we may load the ship.' The task was immediately commenced. It is said that their long boat was filled with grapes. And now, having felled timber to load their ship, and the spring coming on, they made all ready for their departure; (A. D. 1001.) Leif gave the land a name expressive of its good produce, and called it VINLAND, (land of wine.) They then put out to sea, having a fair wind, and, at length, came within sight of Greenland and her icy mountains. As they approached, one of the men asked Leif, 'Why do you steer the ship to that quarter, directly in the teeth of the wind?' Leif answered, 'I guide the helm, and look out at the same time; tell me if you see any thing.' All denied that they saw any thing at all of particular importance. 'I am not sure,' said Leif, 'whether it is a ship or a rock which I see in the distance.' They all presently see it, and pronounce it to be a rock. Leif had so much sharper eyes than all the others, that he saw men upon the rock.\* 'Now,' said Leif, 'I am desirous of striving even against the wind, so that we may reach those yonder; perchance they may have need of our assistance, and their necessity calls upon us to render them our aid; if they are hostile, there can be no danger, for they will be altogether in our power.' They make for the rock, furl their sails, cast anchor, and put out the boat—"

There! exclaimed the doctor, I have completely caught

---

\* Cf. Antiq. Am. p. 37 and p. 191.

you at last; and he rubbed his hands with inexpressible glee.

Why, doctor, what's the matter? asked Mr. Norset, half dismayed, and half amused.

Oh! I have completely caught you; it is impossible you should escape now, said the doctor; and his spectacles underwent a most vigorous manipulation.

Pray tell us what is this wonderful discovery.

Give it up, cried the doctor, — his glee not one whit abated, — give it up at last; don't talk any more about coincidences; I have caught you at last. It is all a fabrication, from beginning to end.

All a fabrication from beginning to end, because there is, as you fancy, one slip, aye, doctor? Suppose I were to argue in the same way on the other side. But pray tell us what this slip is.

Did not the narrative state that they loaded the ship's boat quite full with grapes? How, then, could they "put out the boat?" asked the doctor, in a tone of the greatest exultation.

Really, doctor, I beg your pardon for causing all this excitement. Be calm, I pray. Had this been a fabrication, doubtless this inconsistency would have actually been found; but, as it is, it was only my error; in reading straight onward I omitted two little words, which are, however, of a world of importance. You will remember that it was the long-boat which they filled with grapes. The original, in this place, runs literally thus: "They put out the *other small* boat which they had carried with them." Have you caught me completely, doctor? added he, looking at the doctor with a peculiar glance of the eye.

The doctor looked perfectly disconcerted. The expression of his countenance changed immediately from

glee to the most thorough gall, and every fibre of his body, together with his spectacles, seemed to partake of the electric change.

We will now proceed, doctor, with your permission, said Mr. Norset, with affected humility, seeing that you have yet left us one leg to stand upon: —“ They put out the other small boat which they had carried with them. Then Tyrker demanded who was the captain of the band? (on the rock.) The captain answered that his name was Thorer, and that he was a Norwegian by birth; ‘ What is your name ? ’ he added. Leif gave his name. ‘ Are you the son of Eirek the Red of Brattahlid ? ’ asked he. Leif told him that he was. ‘ I wish now,’ said Leif, ‘ to offer you all a place in my ship, and to take also as much of your goods as my ship will carry.’ They accepted his offer. The vessel then sailed up Eireksfiord until they reached Brattahlid, where they disembarked. Then Lief offered to Thorer and his wife, and three of his men, to take up their residence with him. He showed hospitalities likewise to all the others, as well the sailors of Thorer as his own. There were fifteen men thus preserved by Leif, and from that time he was called LEIF THE LUCKY.

“ This expedition contributed both to the wealth and honor of Leif. In the following winter, a disease attacked the company of Thorer, to which that man himself and many of his companions fell victims. Eirek the Red also died during that winter.

“ There was much talk, now, of the expedition of Leif; and Thorvald, his brother, considered that the lands had been too little explored. Then said Leif to Thorvald, ‘ Go, brother, take my ship to Vinland; but first fetch away from the rock all that Thorer left there.’ Thorvald did so.”



Then we have thus an end of the expedition of Leif, said Mr. Cassall. I must say that I think its details have been exceedingly interesting. It is impossible any longer to doubt that the shores of New England were not only seen, but visited, and a residence of some time fixed upon them, five centuries before Colon touched the islands of the West Indies, by a European race whose nation and language, and the authentic written records of whose expeditions, still exist. The details are indeed full of deep interest; far more so than I could have anticipated.

You will find, said Mr. Norset, that the details of the remaining narratives are full of as deep, if not much deeper interest. You will find in them, too, as many marks of truth and authenticity as we have found in the narratives of Biarni and of Leif. We proceed next to the NARRATIVE OF THE EXPEDITION OF THORVALD.

What was the date of the commencement of this expedition? asked Mr. Cassall.

We learn this, answered Mr. Norset, from comparing the different incidents and statements which have already come under our attention. Leif, we found, went to Vinland in the year 1000. He stayed there during the winter, and returned to Greenland in the following spring. It is related that, during the winter next following his return, (1001—2,) Thorer and Eirek the Red both died; and it was just at the same time that Thorvald's determination to undertake the voyage to Vinland was made, as we learn from the fact, that Leif, when he granted his brother the use of his ship, desired him first to fetch the remainder of the wreck of Thorer's ship from the rock where that man was found. Thorvald appears to have lost no time in fitting out his vessel and undertaking the voyage. It was, then, in the following spring,—for it was in the spring that the Northmen always undertook

important and distant voyages, — that he left Greenland; that is, the spring of 1002.

That appears satisfactory and clear, said Mr. Cassall. Will you now proceed with Thorvald's narrative?

“ Now Thorvald made preparations for this expedition under the authority of his brother Leif; ” — which expression shows that the voyage was undertaken after the death of Eirik the Red, and when Leif had succeeded to his authority; — “ taking with him thirty companions. They fitted out the ship, and put out to sea, but nothing is recorded concerning the events of the voyage; ” — which statement is a proof that the writer of this narrative was anxious to make no statements which were not authorized by *certain positive* tradition.\*

Yes, yes, said the doctor, that is very fine indeed; but pray why were the details of Thorvald's voyage less complete than those of others?

I am glad you asked the question, doctor; because it gives me the opportunity of calling your attention to the difference which does exist in this respect between the narrative of Thorvald's expedition and the others recorded; *and which difference is another strong internal proof of the truth and correctness of the whole.* We shall presently see that Thorvald never returned from this expedition, but perished on his way home. His sailors, of course, were less careful than himself about particulars. Hence the imperfection of the narrative of this expedition in many points noticed in all the others. We find, here, only the most marked leading circumstances stated, which it was impossible to forget, while many details, which Thorvald would doubtless have recorded, have thus been lost. A striking and, I may add, unfortunate

---

\* See ante, p. 22, and note B, at end of volume.

instance of this will be seen, in a voyage of exploration which was made to the westward of Vinland. To proceed : —

“Nothing is recorded concerning the events of the voyage before their arrival at *Leifsbudr*, (or *Leifsbooths*, which was the name given to the dwellings erected by Leif,) in Vinland, where, the ship being drawn ashore; they passed the winter, (1002—1003,) supporting themselves by catching fish.”

And how do you mean to pretend that Thorvald knew when he got to Vinland; or how did he know where to find Leifsbooths? This looks rather suspicious, said the doctor, with a very significant glance of the eye and nod of the head.

Have you forgotten, doctor, replied Mr. Norset, that Thorvald had the use of Leif's ship? Do you think that he left Greenland without making a single inquiry of his brother, as to the course which he had sailed, or the appearances and relative positions of the different localities? Or do you think it likely that he would dismiss every one of Leif's sailors, for the sake of taking in a fresh and totally inexperienced crew? not to speak of the probability of there being plenty of sailors to be had, at that early period of Greenland's settlement, when she had not been colonized more than sixteen years!

Perhaps that will explain it, said the doctor, in a condescending tone.

*Perhaps* it will, aye! There is a great deal of doubt about it, is there not? said Mr. Norset, with a smile.

“In the ensuing spring, Thorvald desired his men to make ready the ship, and selected some to go in the ship's boat along the western coast, and to explore it through the summer. The country seemed fair and woody, there being but little distance between the forests

and the ocean, and much white sandy shore. There was a great number of islands and numerous shallows."

Is that the expedition to which you alluded, asked Mr. Cassall, as the one concerning which the details have unfortunately been lost?

It is, answered Mr. Norset; and we may truly call the loss of those details unfortunate. It would have been easy, the doctor will of course perceive, for very full details to have been inserted in a fabrication. The brief facts stated, however, are, as far as they go, precisely accurate, as descriptive of the condition, before the forests were cleared, of the whole eastern coast of Connecticut, Long Island, New Jersey, and, indeed, of all along the eastern coast of the United States. It is not a little curious that the description given of these very coasts in the account of the expedition of *Verrazzani*, the French navigator, in 1524, corresponds almost precisely, in brevity and language, with that thus given by Thorvald's men. I quote from the pages of one strongly prejudiced against the discoveries of the Northmen, and who, therefore, cannot have intended to afford any corroborative testimony to the truth of the narratives of their expeditions. His testimony is of course the more valuable on this account. Describing the course of *Verrazzani* along these same coasts, he says,\* "*All the shore was shoal, but free from rocks, and covered with fine sand; the country was flat.*" The doctor will of course rejoice in this authority. Where the description in our narrative differs from this, it differs from it only in being fuller and more accurate; as far as they go together, they precisely coincide. These parts of the coast necessarily lay to the *westward* of the position of *Leifsbooths*. From the mouth of *Seaconnet* passage

\* *Bancroft's Hist. U. S.* vol. i. p. 16. 4th ed.

they must necessarily go *direct west*, in order to coast along these shores. The exploration probably extended as far south as the Carolinas, or still farther, since they were absent several months; the account stating, as we shall presently see, that they did not return till *autumn*, having left Leifsbooths in the *spring*.

The fact of this expedition is interesting, said Mr. Cassall, although such a very brief notice of it is given.

Very much so. The want of fuller details is, however, greatly to be regretted; the narrative only further states with respect to it, — “They found no habitations of men or beasts there, except in an island, *far west*, where they saw a single wooden shed.” This was sufficient to prove that the land was inhabited, though, as they do not appear to have penetrated at all into the interior, they saw no more of the natives. “They found nothing more of human workmanship, and in the autumn they returned to Leifsbooths.

“The next summer,” — so that Thorvald and his companions had already remained at Leifsbooths, in Vinland, for two whole years, — “the next summer, (being A. D. 1004,) Thorvald, with a portion of his company, in the great ship, coasted along the eastern shore,” — that is, necessarily, the coast of the peninsula of Cape Cod, — “and passed round the land to the northward —”

Ah! cried Mr. Cassall, that is curious. It corresponds exactly to the shape of this peninsular promontory. Does he get to the extreme northern point of the promontory of Cape Cod?

We shall see. The narrative proceeds: — “They were then driven by a storm against a neck of land,\*

---

\* In the English Synopsis of the *Antiq. Am.* placed at the beginning of the work, there occurs, in speaking of Thorvald's expedi-

and the ship having stranded, the keel was damaged. Remaining here for some time, they repaired their ship. Then Thorvald said to his companions, 'Now let us fix up the keel on this neck of land, and let us call the place KIALAR-NESS,' (Keel promontory.)"

And, pray, where is Kialar-ness situated? asked the doctor.

There cannot be much difficulty about that, answered Mr. Norset. We have seen that they sailed round the peninsular promontory of Cape Cod, and up to the northward. The neck of land must necessarily be near the northern extremity of the long narrow neck of Cape Cod. This appears plain enough, but will, if possible, become plainer, when we come to the account of Thorfinn's visiting Kialar-ness. Let us proceed:—

"Having done as he desired, they sailed along the coast, leaving that neck to the eastward, and entered the mouths of the neighboring bays,"—of which you know that there are many along that coast,—“until they came to a certain promontory which was covered with wood. Here they cast anchor, and prepared to land; and Thorvald and all his companions went on shore.

tion to Kialar-ness, the following passage:—“Thorvald sailed eastward, &c. and then northward, *past a remarkable headland enclosing a bay, and which was opposite to another headland.*” There certainly is nothing in the original which at all expresses the sense or language here given; and, unless there be some typographical omission, such an account of Thorvald's course is totally unwarranted. This is, the author believes, the only instance where this synopsis conveys any misconception; but this instance is sufficient to show how necessary is an examination of the original documents. This error probably arose from the preparer of the synopsis following, for the moment, the map, instead of the narrative. The details given in the narrative are more than sufficient to identify the locality. No intentional misrepresentation, therefore, could possibly have been designed.

Then said Thorvald, 'This is a pleasant place, and here I should like to fix my habitation.' "

Here the doctor, who had evidently been anxious to throw in a word during the whole of this description, exclaimed, —

And, pray, what point is this, where Thorvald would have liked to have fixed his habitation?

It is not very easy to determine exactly the promontory to which allusion is here made, answered Mr. Norset. There is, however, I think, the best reason to conclude that the promontory to the southeast of Boston Bay is here signified, commonly called *Point Alderton*. The promontory of Gurnet Point would seem to correspond to the account given of the place, but that, from the preceding narrative, it would appear that, before coming to this promontory, they must have passed the mouths of several small bays, which they could hardly have done before reaching Gurnet Point, but which they must have done before reaching Point Alderton. The aspect of Point Alderton, as described by Hitchcock, in his "Report on the Geology of Massachusetts," p. 96, precisely corresponds to what we gather from the narrative before us. It would seem, too, from the subsequent details in this narrative, that the bay within the promontory must have been one of considerable size, — larger than Plymouth harbor. However, as to the precise locality of this promontory, we are able to determine with less positive certainty than with respect to the other places which have been mentioned.

I am glad, said the doctor, that you have the modesty to allow that there is one locality which it is possible for you not to be able to identify.

I am obliged to you, doctor. You will, of course, not fail to observe that, had this account been a fabrication,

we should have had as precise means given us of determining the locality of this spot, as we have had of determining any other locality.

The doctor appeared rather annoyed at having thus drawn on himself exactly the reverse aspect of evidence to that which he had an idea that his insinuation contained.

“They afterwards,” — continues the narrative, which, as before noticed, is doubtless thus brief, owing to the misfortune which subsequently befel Thorvald, — “they afterwards, having returned to their ship, perceived, on the sandy shore of the bay, within the promontory, three elevations. They went towards them, and saw three small boats made of skins, (that is, canoes,) and under each, three men. They seized all of these except one, who escaped with his canoe. They killed those whom they had taken. Having returned to the promontory, they looked round, and saw, in the inner bay, several elevations, which they considered to be habitations.—”

So, then, said the doctor, they met with some natives at last.

They did, to their cost.

To whose cost do you mean? I think it was to the cost of the natives.

It was, however, to the cost of Thorvald's party; for they lost their bold leader, and he lost his life.

Well, I think it served them right. I don't see what business they had to put the natives to death, whether they found them under canoes or any thing else.

Probably some symptoms of hostility were shown, or some circumstance rendered it necessary, in the eyes of Thorvald, to destroy them. At any rate, doctor, I hope you will not be too sentimental on the subject; for, though I would by no means defend any cruelty of the North-



men, yet no treatment that the natives received at their hands can exceed, in cruelty, that which they have since received at the hands of European nations, — boasting a higher degree of refinement and civilization. You will especially remember the treatment inflicted upon them by your worthy friends, the Spanish colonists, though I do n't know that they are receiving much better treatment, at the present day, at the hands of a government which boasts much of its preëminent liberality.

I cannot pretend to defend the treatment the Indians have received from the early settlers, whether Spanish or English, or which they are receiving at this day from our own government. I believe, indeed, it is indefensible.

I am truly glad, doctor, to hear you acknowledge this so candidly. I have not heard one honest American, since the barbarous, unjust, and cruel affair of the Cherokees in Georgia, who has uttered different sentiments. The day of retribution will come.

It is more to the selfishness of individuals, said the doctor, than to the cruelty of the government, or of the people at large, that these outrages on humanity have owed their existence.

There I perfectly agree with you ; but the whole community ought to rise, as one man, against such outrages, as, much to its credit, the public press in general did in the case of the Cherokees ; and there ought to be moral courage enough in those in high places to resist the perpetration of such flagrant violations of all the laws of God and rights of man.

True, true ; but let us dismiss this topic now, or it will carry us too far from our subject. I acknowledge that it is impossible for us to say a word, without self-rebuke, against any conduct of the Northmen to the natives.

The narrative proceeds :—“ They were all afterwards

overcome by such a heavy sleep, that none of them were able to keep watch. After some time, a loud shout was heard, which roused them all, and the words which roused them were these : — ‘ Awake, Thorvald, and all thy company, if you wish to preserve your lives ; embark immediately, and make the best of your way from the land. ’ — ”

And, pray, who was the speaker of these portentous words ? asked the doctor.

It does not appear from the narrative ; but we must presume that it was one of the company who was awakened before the others, and, seeing their danger, aroused his companions. There is no intimation or expression from which it can be gathered that this was a superstitious tale of any unearthly visitant.

“ Then an innumerable multitude of canoes was seen approaching from the inner bay, by which Thorvald’s party was immediately attacked. Then said Thorvald, ‘ Let us raise protections over the sides of the ship, and defend ourselves as well as we are able ; though we can avail little against this multitude. ’ So it was done. The Skrælings — ”

Skrælings ! who were they ? asked the doctor.

Such is the name we find given to the natives throughout these narratives ; whence it is derived is uncertain.

“ The Skrælings cast their weapons at them for some time, and then precipitously retired. Then Thorvald inquired what wounds his men had received. They denied that any of them had been at all wounded. ‘ I have received a wound under my arm, ’ said Thorvald, ‘ with an arrow, which, flying between the ship’s side and the edge of my shield, fastened itself in my armpit ; here is the arrow ; this will cause my death. ’ ”

The arrow must have been poisoned, said the doctor,

or I imagine that death would not necessarily have been occasioned from a wound in that situation.

Most probably it was poisoned. We know that the natives have been in the habit of poisoning the arrows employed in their conflicts with their enemies. The words of Thorvald proceed: — “Now it is my advice that you prepare to return home as quickly as possible; but me you shall carry to the promontory which seemed to me so pleasant a place to dwell in: perhaps the words which fell from me shall prove true, and I shall indeed abide there for a season. There bury me, and place a cross at my head, and another at my feet, and call that place for ever more, *KROSSA-NESS*,’ (promontory of the crosses.) At that time, Greenland had been converted to Christianity,” (this being A. D. 1004, and Christianity having been introduced by Leif, in 999, as we have seen,) “but Eirek the Red had died without professing Christianity.\* Then Thorvald expired. Every thing was done according to his directions; and those who had gone with him on this expedition, having joined their companions at Leifsbooths, informed them of all that had happened. They passed the following winter (the third, 1004—1005) there, and prepared quantities of grapes to carry home. Early in the following spring, (1005,) they set sail for Greenland, and arrived safely in Eireksfiord, having much melancholy intelligence to convey to Leif.”

And so this was the end of Thorvald! said Mr. Cassall, in a tone of commiseration: really, his was a melancholy fate. There was a boldness and a spirit in his enterprise, which far exceeded that of his brother Leif.

---

\* *Antiq. Am.* Cf. pp. 46, 119, and 120. In the latter place the progress of Christianity is more particularly detailed, and Eirek’s unwillingness to abandon his ancient faith is mentioned.

He seemed determined to explore the country thoroughly, sending and accompanying parties east and west. I have no doubt that we have lost much of a very interesting narrative, owing to his premature death.

I agree with you, said Mr. Norset. There is no doubt that his explorations were carried further than those of any other who visited America at this period. But, however, the doctor will now be convinced that one of my most important propositions is established, namely, that the Northmen not only actually visited these shores of New England, for the express purpose of exploration, but that they made, at different times, residences of a considerable length here. Thus Leif, as we have seen, erected habitations, and dwelt in them for one year. The companions of Thorvald (he himself dying at the end of the second year) dwelt in them for three full years. What say you, doctor?

If it is all true, they certainly did, answered the doctor.

If! — well, doctor, I'll allow you the benefit of all the *ifs* you like, knowing that it is impossible for you, or any one else, by any fair or candid argument, to convert that *if* into a negative.

Pray, what follows the narrative of Thorvald in the "Account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland?" asked Mr. Cassall.

A narrative of an expedition of Thorstein, the youngest son of Eirek, follows, which expedition was, however, unsuccessful. There are some curious details contained in this account, which give an insight into the manners and also the superstitions of the times, and may be worth repeating, if you are willing to listen to them.

I shall be much pleased to hear them, said Mr. Cassall, if it will be agreeable to the doctor.

What! we are coming to the tales of superstitions now, are we? said the doctor. Let us hear them, by all means. I suppose you will not insist upon my placing implicit credit in all that is here related? added he, glancing the corner of his eye at Mr. Norset.

O, doctor, you are at perfect liberty to please yourself in that respect. I must observe, however, as regards these portions of the narrative, that there is nothing related but what might have been absolutely and strictly true, but which yet, — when looked at through the superstitious light in which we know that, until a comparatively recent period, and sometimes even now, many circumstances and events were viewed which natural phenomena are sufficient to explain, — might be easily tinged with that supernatural air which it is possible to throw over almost every transaction. Of course you will be able to separate this merely extraneous character from the real facts of the narration. The whole gives us an interesting insight into the habits and modes of thinking and feeling of the times. I will proceed, then, straight forward with the narrative.

Pardon me a moment, said Mr. Cassall; did you not say that Thorstein was the first husband of Gudrid, who subsequently became the wife of Thorfinn? and that details were given in the “account of Thorfinn,” as well as in that “of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland,” of Thorstein and Gudrid?\*

I did.

Are the details similar in each account?

They are similar in all the main facts. In some of the circumstantial details there are variations. Thus, for example, it is not stated in the “account of Thor-

---

\* See ante, p. 91.

finn," that Thorstein ever contemplated visiting Vinland. This fact might easily be omitted as unimportant, or be unknown, since the truth was that he never reached Vinland. Both accounts state the place and time and cause of his death in a similar manner, with similar details of all the principal attendant circumstances; which latter details comprise much the principal portion of this part of the narrative in each account.

If that is the case, said the doctor, I suppose that Gudrid plays rather a conspicuous figure in these transactions?

She does, answered Mr. Norset.

Well, then, have you no details concerning her early history? We know Eirek and his history pretty well by this time, and his sons come to us with somewhat familiar faces; but Gudrid comes upon the stage quite a stranger and unknown. We certainly ought to have some more ceremonious introduction to her ladyship. Know you nothing of her birth, parentage, and education?

O yes! somewhat full details are given of her early history, and, as she makes so conspicuous a figure in the subsequent narrative of Thorfinn, it may, perhaps, be as well, as you suggest, to glance at those details.

Pray let us have all the particulars which you possess concerning her, said the doctor.

Such being your wish, we will take that which relates to her early history, in the first place, and afterwards proceed to the narrative connected with her first husband, Thorstein.

So be it, said the doctor; to which arrangement Mr. Cassall signified his assent.

As this is merely a kind of *episode* to our narrative, remarked Mr. Norset, and is not therefore liable to give rise, in its details, to any controversy, we shall proceed

more rapidly than we have hitherto done. Now, gentlemen, *attention!* —

“There\* was a sea-king (arch-pirate) named OLAF, commonly known by the name of OLAF the WHITE. He was the son of king INGIALD, son of HELGA, son of OLAF, son of GUDRED, son of HALFDAN WHITEFOOT, king of UPLAND. Olaf went on expeditions into the western country, and subjected to his rule, Dublin, in Ireland, and the whole county of Dublin, and ruled there with the title of king.

“He married a wife named AUD, the daughter of KETIL Pugnose, the son of BIARNI Splay-foot, a man of high station in Norway.”

Elegant cognomens these Northmen give, remarked the doctor.

“They had a son named THORSTEIN the RED. Olaf fell in battle in Ireland. Aud and Thorstein then retired to Sudreyir, (*Hebrides*, west of Scotland.) There Thorstein married THORID, daughter of EYVIND EASTMAN, (that is, from the east country,) and sister of HELGA the LEAN. They had many children.

“Thorstein lived as a sea-king: he joined himself with SIGURD Jarl the POWERFUL, son of EYSTEIN the NOISY. They seized Kaithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Murray, (in Scotland,) and more than half of Scotland, which Thorstein ruled with the title of king, until, deceived by the craft of the Scots, he was slain in battle. Aud was in Kaithness when she heard of the slaughter of Thorstein. She caused a vessel to be secretly fitted out, and went to the Orkneys. There she left GRO, the daughter of Thorstein the Red, and mother of GRELAD, whom Thorfinn Jarl married.

---

\* *Antiq. Am.* p. 84.

“Afterwards Aud went to Iceland with a ship’s crew of twenty freed men. She staid the first winter at Biarnhaven, with her brother Biarni. She afterwards took possession of DALALAND. She worshipped at Krosshol; for she had been baptized, and was a zealous Christian. She was accompanied to Iceland by many men of renown, who, having been taken prisoners in piratical expeditions in the west, were called *retainers*. One of these was named VIFIL. He was of noble birth, and had been taken prisoner in the west country, (neighborhood of Iceland,) and was called a slave, until Aud had given him his freedom.

“When Aud gave lands to all her followers, Vifil asked her why she gave him no land, as she did to all the others. Aud said that it mattered little, for that; wherever he was, he would be esteemed noble. She afterwards gave him Vifilsdal, (Vale of Vifil,) where he subsequently dwelt. He married. His sons were THORBIORN, and THORGEIR, youths of great promise, who grew up under their father’s roof.

“THORGEIR,\* the (eldest) son of Vifil, married ARNOR, daughter of EINAR of LAUGARBREKK. The name of another daughter of Einar was HALLVEIG, whom THORBIORN (the younger son of Vifil) married, the farm of Laugarbrekk, in Helligval, being given as her portion. Thither Thorbiorn went to live, and acquired great honor. He was a good neighbor, and was liberal and sumptuous in his mode of living. He had a daughter named GUDRID. She excelled all other women in beauty; in every accomplishment and grace, she surpassed all others.

“There was a man named ORM, who lived at ARNAS-TAP. He had a wife named HALLDIS. Orm was a good

---

\* Antiq. Am: p. 95.



neighbor, and a fast friend of Thorbiorn;—and Gudrid often passed some time at his house.

“There was a man named THORGEIR, living at Thorgeirsfel, and very wealthy. He had been a freed man. He had a son named EINAR, of handsome form, well endowed by nature with all that is most noble, and fond of magnificence. Einar was a merchant, and had met with great success. He passed the winters alternately in Iceland and in Norway.

“It happened one autumn that Einar, being in Iceland, brought his merchandise to SNJOFELLSTRAND. He came to Arnastap. Orm offered him the hospitalities of his house. These Einar accepted, for a friendship had long existed between them. Einar exhibited his goods to Orm and his family, and desired his host to accept whatever he liked. Orm thanked him, with many compliments.

“While they were thus engaged, a female passed the door. Einar asked Orm who that lovely damsel was. ‘I have not seen her before,’ he said. Orm answered,—‘It is Gudrid, my guest, the daughter of Thorbiorn, of Laugarbrekk.’ Then said Einar, ‘That is well: has she many suitors?’ Orm answered, ‘There have been many, but the task is not easy; for both her father and herself are very difficult to satisfy in the choice of a husband.’ ‘I am desirous,’ said Einar, ‘of becoming a suitor; and I could wish that you would open the matter to Thorbiorn, her father, and do all in your power to bring it about: you will ever deserve my devoted friendship if you shall accomplish the end. Thorbiorn must easily perceive that this connection will be advantageous to us both; for he is a most excellent man, and of good estate; but I have been told that his property is rapidly decreasing. My father and myself possess great wealth;

wherefore this matter will be highly to the interest of Thorbiorn.'

"'I consider you as my friend, indeed,' replied Orm; 'but I am anxious not to move in this affair; for Thorbiorn is high-tempered and proud.' Einar professed that he would be satisfied with no excuse. Orm at length consented to do as he wished. Einar then returned home.

"After some time, Thorbiorn, as was his wont, prepared a sumptuous autumnal feast; for he delighted in magnificence. Orm of Arnastap was present, with many other friends of Thorbiorn. In the course of conversation with Thorbiorn, Orm mentioned that Einar, of Thorgeirsfel, had recently been with him. He proceeded to solicit for a wife in the name of Einar, urging the benefits of the connection, and saying, 'This matter will be very advantageous to you, friend, in a pecuniary point of view.' Thorbiorn answered,—'I little expected this from you; that I should marry my daughter to the son of a slave! You imagine, perhaps, that money fails me, that you make such a proposition. She shall remain no longer with you, since you consider her worthy of so mean an estate.'

"Orm returned home, as did all the others. Gudrid remained at her father's house during the whole winter. In the following spring, Thorbiorn again gave a feast; the company was numerous, for it was a very great feast. In the midst of the banquet, Thorbiorn, silence having been obtained, thus spoke:—'I have lived here long, and have found all men kind and friendly, and all our intercourse has been most happy. At length, however, I find myself threatened with pecuniary difficulties, although, till this time, I have been considered to abound in wealth. I prefer to leave the country, rather than

lose the station which I hold ; wherefore I design to seek a home elsewhere, in preference to reducing my present establishment : I shall rely on the promises which Eirik the Red, my friend, made, when we separated in Breidafjord. I have determined, in the ensuing summer, to go to Greenland.'

"All were grieved at this sudden change ; for Thorbiorn was much beloved. They knew, however, that it was in vain to expostulate.

"Thorbiorn presented gifts to all ; the banquet closed, and each returned to his own home. Thorbiorn sold his lands, and bought a ship in the port of Hraunhafn. Thirty men accompanied him, among whom were Orm of Arnastap, and his wife, together with other friends of Thorbiorn, who were unwilling to separate from him.

"They put out to sea. After they had been some time at sea, the wind fell. They wandered from their course, and met with many disasters. Disease attacked them : Orm and Halldis, his wife, died, and half of the whole company. The ship was tossed on the ocean, and all the survivors underwent much suffering and hardship in every way. At length, in the beginning of winter, they reached Heriulfness, in Greenland.

"There was a man then living in Heriulfness, named THORKEL, a man of great authority. He extended hospitalities to Thorbiorn and all his companions through the whole of this winter, and treated them very kindly.

"There was at that time a great scarcity in Greenland, for those who had gone out had some of them returned with small supplies ; others had not yet returned at all.

"There lived in that neighborhood a woman named THORBIORG. She was a fortune-teller, and was called the LITTLE WITCH. She had had nine sisters, all fortune-tellers, but she alone survived. It was the habit of

Thorbiorg to attend the feasts usually given in winter; those persons chiefly inviting her, who desired to learn their future fortunes, or the prospects of the supplies. Thorkel being one of the principal inhabitants, it seemed to be his place to ascertain when the present scarcity would be relieved. He therefore invited the fortune-teller, and treated her with great courtesy, as was the custom when such women were entertained.

“An elevated seat was prepared for her, on which was a cushion stuffed with cock’s feathers. When evening was come, she arrived, accompanied by a man who had been sent to meet her. She was clothed as follows:—her outer garment was a blue cloak, trimmed all over with ribbands, and ornamented with precious stones all round the border. She had on a necklace of glass beads. On her head she wore a black hood, made of lamb’s-skin, lined with white cats’ skins. She carried in her hand a staff, ornamented with copper, and which had precious stones fixed into its head. She was girt with a girdle made of bark, from which hung a large leathern pouch, in which she carried the instruments of her incantations. On her feet she wore high shoes, covered with hair, and made of calf-skin, with long lachets, to the extremities of which were fastened little balls of tin. Her hands were covered with gloves of cat-skin, white and hairy on the inside.

“As she entered, all esteemed it their duty to address her in respectful terms. She returned their salutations as she thought proper. Thorkel, the host, led her by the hand to the seat prepared for her, and asked her to cast her eyes (as in bestowal of a blessing) over all his household. She was exceedingly brief-spoken on all matters.

“As the evening advanced, the tables were laid. It is

here proper to state what dish was prepared for the fortune-teller. A mess was made of goats' milk and the hearts of all the animals which could be obtained. She used a copper spoon, and a brazen knife, the handle of which was made of a twisted tooth, and the point of which was broken.

“The tables having been cleared, Thorkel, the host, advancing towards Thorbiorg, asked her how the arrangements of his household pleased her, and how soon she would be able to give any answer concerning those matters on which they all anxiously desired to consult her. She said she should be unable to give any answer before the following day.

“The next day, towards evening, all preparations were made which she required for her incantations. She desired that some women should be found who could sing the mystic verses necessary to the incantation, and which are called VARDLOKKUR, (allurers of the tutelary genii.) No woman could be found able to sing these verses, although they sought over the whole neighborhood.

“Then said Gudrid, — ‘I am neither learned nor a prophetess; but Halldis, my friend, taught me a song in Iceland which she called Vardlokkur.’ ‘Happy circumstance!’\* exclaimed Thorkel; but she answered, ‘I cannot take any part in this matter, for I am a Christian woman.’ Thorbiorg replied, — ‘You may render great assistance to others, and without any loss to yourself. I demand of Thorkel all things necessary.’ Then Thorkel strongly endeavored to persuade Gudrid, and she at length consented to do as he wished. All the women

---

\* This expression, in the original, (see *Antiq. Am.* p. 109,) refers to the great knowledge which Gudrid exhibited in being acquainted with these verses. The sense, however, is best rendered, it is thought, by translating it as above.

then surrounded the place of incantation, Thorbiorg sitting on the elevation in the midst. Gudrid sang the mystic verses in tones so sweet, and with such grace, that each one present thought that he had never heard any thing so musical or sweet before.

“The fortune-teller, having thanked her for her services, declared that many spirits had been allured by the sweetness of the verses so exquisitely sung, and would now be present with their aid, ‘who before,’ she added, ‘had intended to be adverse to us, or to render us no aid. Many things are now known to me which were before unknown as well to me as to others. This I have to say to you, Thorkel, that this scarcity will endure no longer than the present winter, and that the coming spring will hail a happier year. The diseases which now oppress your people will leave them sooner than you have imagined.’

“‘To you, Gudrid,’ she continued, ‘for the assistance which you have rendered, I will give an immediate reward; for your future fates are known to me. You will marry a man, here in Greenland, of most honorable station, but you will not enjoy him long; for your life will be passed in Iceland, where a great and noble race shall spring from you. A more glorious destiny awaits your offspring, than it is in my power to testify. And now, daughter, hail! and fare thee well!’

“Then all the men approached the witch, each to seek what most he desired to know. She was not difficult to be entreated, nor did her responses err. Presently others sent for her from other places, being desirous to consult her, and she left the house of Thorkel.

“But Thorbiorn went away, for he was unwilling to be in the house while such superstitions were entertained. The weather became milder, as Thorbiorg had foretold.

Thorbiorn immediately got ready his vessel and pursued his course, till he came to Brattahlid. Eirek received him in a very friendly manner, rejoicing at his arrival. Thorbiorn spent the whole of that year in the house of Eirek, as did his sailors among the neighbors. In the ensuing spring, Eirek gave Thorbiorn land in Stokkaness, where he built a sumptuous mansion, and thenceforth dwelt there."

And thus, said Mr. Norset, ends the account of Gudrid. I hope you have been edified.

A most marvellous kind of a narrative, truly, said the doctor. However, we are better acquainted with the lady than we were. After all, the superstitions of these people were not much greater, if at all, than what prevailed very commonly among our own people, until a comparatively recent period, and which are not totally extinguished yet, in the minds of many.

True, doctor; and you will acknowledge, I think, that the narrative thus given, though, as you say, a marvellous kind of a story, bears about it, in its details, the character of the age to which it is ascribed, and that it has the aspect of truth.

Perhaps I may admit that, said the doctor; but you gain nothing to your argument from such an admission.

Yes I do, answered Mr. Norset; the admission of the authentic character of one part of a narration necessarily spreads itself over the whole, and becomes testimony to the truth of the remainder.

Well, well, said the doctor, we shall see about that presently. Don't be too anxious to seize on all my admissions.

Indeed, doctor, you will not allow me fair play. Certainly, if you are compelled to make an admission, I am entitled to the full benefit of it throughout the whole of my argument.

I must take good care, then, not to make any more admissions.

You cannot help yourself, doctor, said Mr. Norset, smiling; they drop incidentally, before you are aware of it, as must necessarily be the case in discussing a subject of this kind, where the unity of the testimony is so complete.

I suppose, interposed Mr. Cassall, that we may now return to the account of Thorstein, and his expedition, having had this episode concerning Gudrid his wife.

We will, if you please; and then we shall see something more of the superstition of the age. It is obvious that the station of Thorfinn and his descendants led to the recording of these imagined prodigies. We know that there is a disposition, even in our own day, to throw something of the wonderful about the birth, or early years, of any character which has subsequently attained to great celebrity.

The prodigies in the narration of Thorstein's history relate, then, to Gudrid, I presume?

They do principally concern her, and may, therefore, properly be considered as a part of her history.

This narration, I think you said, is contained both in the account of Eirek the Red, and in that of Thorfinn?

No; the narrative of Thorstein's intended expedition is contained only in the "*account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland.*" The remainder of the details, in which Gudrid figures, is contained in each account, and at pretty nearly the same length, and with very slight difference in the facts stated. We will compare the accounts as we proceed. The narrative, continuing from the account of Thorvald's death, proceeds thus;—and you will perceive that it takes up the thread of Gudrid's history where the episode which we have just perused left it:—



“In\* the mean time, (that is, in the winter of 1004—5, before the return of Thorvald’s ship,) the following circumstance had transpired in Greenland. THORSTEIN EIREKSON had married GUDRID, the daughter of Thorbiorn.

“Thorstein was seized with a strong desire to pass over to Vinland, to fetch the body of his brother Thorvald. He therefore fitted out a vessel, with that design in view, and manned it with twenty-five men, selected for their strength and stature, besides himself and Gudrid. When all was ready, they put out to sea, and were soon out of sight of land. Through the whole summer they were tossed on the deep, and were driven they knew not whither. In the first week of winter, † (that is, about 20th October,) they made land, which they found to be in LYSUFIORD, on the western coast of Greenland. Thorstein endeavored to find accommodation for his men, and succeeded in obtaining it for all of them. He himself, and his wife, were without any accommodation. They remained, therefore, for some days in the ship.

“At that time the Christian religion had been but recently introduced. —”

Pardon me, interrupted Mr. Cassall, but what was the date of Thorstein’s expedition?

It would appear to have been undertaken immediately, or almost immediately, after the return of the ship of Thorvald, bearing the tidings of that leader’s death. We are told that, “in the mean time,” — that is, before the return of the ship, — Thorstein had married Gudrid; and, from a collation of the different accounts, it appears

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 47. See also, ante, p. 127.

† The winter was reckoned by the ancient Northmen to commence on the first Saturday which fell between the 10th and 18th days of October. Cf. Antiq. Am. 48, note *a*, and 437, note *b*, &c.

that he cannot have lived more than a year after the marriage. So that his voyage was undertaken in the summer of 1005, and his death took place in the winter of the same year.

“It happened one day, that some men came early in the morning to Thorstein’s cabin. Their leader asked how many men there were in the cabin? Thorstein answered, ‘There are two; whom do you seek?’ The stranger replied,—‘I am THORSTEIN; surnamed THORSTEIN the SWARTHY; I have come here to offer to you and your wife entertainment at my house.’ Thorstein said that he must consult the wishes of his wife;—”

A good husband, remarked the doctor, tartly.

Very, was the reply of Mr. Norset.

“She left the matter to his decision —”

An excellent wife, interposed Mr. Cassall.

Uncommonly so, was the rejoinder.

“He accepted the offer. Then said Thorstein the Swarthy,—‘I will come, to-morrow, with a yoke of oxen, to bring you to my house. I want nothing that can conduce to your entertainment; but it is tedious staying with me, on account of the loneliness of my family, for there are only two of us, me and my wife. I am also of a different religion to you, though I consider yours as the more excellent.’ On the following morning he came, with a yoke of oxen, and took them to his house; and they remained with Thorstein the Swarthy, who entertained them hospitably.”

This was a curious kind of a rencounter, however, said the doctor. Pray, who was this Thorstein the Swarthy, who came in such a singular manner, and lived in such solitude, and adhered to one religion, though he considered another to be better? He must have been a singular genius.

So the narrative gives us to understand. We are, however, told little of his history.

And do both the narratives carry Thorstein Eirekson to the house of this Thorstein the Swarthy?

They do; though, as I have before mentioned, nothing is said, in the narrative of Thorfinn, about his having been driven there after the failure of his unfortunate expedition.\* It is from this point that the two accounts agree.

Proceed, then.

“Gudrid was conspicuous for the comeliness of her form, for her prudence, and for her good discourse.

“It happened, in the ensuing winter, (1005—6,) that a severe disease attacked the sailors of Thorstein Eirekson, which carried off many of them. Thorstein commanded that coffins should be made for the bodies of all the dead, and that they should be carried down to the ship; ‘for I intend,’ said he, ‘to carry them all to Eireksfiord in the ensuing summer,’ (to be buried.)

“It was not long before the same disease entered the family of Thorstein, (the Swarthy,) whose wife, named Grimhild,” — or, according to the other account, *Sigrid*, — “was the first attacked; and, although she was of great size and strength, she yet became the victim of the disease.” In the “account of Thorfinn,” some curious particulars as to her illness are given, which, as they record one of those cases of *spectral illusions* which have so often been referred to supernatural agency, and given rise to stories of ghosts and spiritual visitants, may be worthy record.

I do not understand, interrupted the doctor, how it

---

\* The reason of which has been explained, ante, p. 130; and see next page.

happens that such full particulars should be given in the "account of Thorfinn" of this part of the history of Eirek's family, when such meagre details are given of all other parts of the history of that family.

I have already \* told you, answered Mr. Norset, that Gudrid became the wife of Thorfinn. All these details concern her more or less immediately, and there is, therefore, just the same reason for their being found in the account of Thorfinn, as there is for details of the progress of Christianity being found there. It was a branch of the subject in which the narrator of Thorfinn's history was as much interested as the narrator of Eirek's history, and one in which each would have precisely the same source of information, namely, Gudrid herself. It is obvious that the first Icelandic narrator, probably Thorfinn himself, who handed down these facts to the Saga-men, would, through Gudrid, have every means of knowing all *these* details accurately, which he would not have with respect to other points in the history of Eirek's family. The circumstance, then, of the fullness of these particular details, and the meagreness of the others relating to the family of Eirek, in the "account of Thorfinn," affords a very striking additional internal proof of the truth and authenticity of both the narratives. But, to proceed with the account of Grimhild's illness, as given in the "*account of Thorfinn.*"

"One † evening Grimhild expressed her desire to go outside the house with Gudrid. When they had reached the outer door, Grimhild uttered a loud cry. Said Gudrid, 'We have been incautious, for you are little able to bear the cold draught; let us go back into the house as quickly as possible.' Grimhild answered, 'We

---

\* Ante, p. 91, and 129.

† Antiq. Am. p. 124.

cannot easily go back, as it is; for here, before the door, moves the whole band of the dead men, and I recognize there your husband Thorstein, and myself also. I never saw a sight so dreadful!' Not long after, she added, 'Now, Gudrid, let us go back, for I do not any longer see the crowd.' Thorstein, too, had disappeared, whom she had just seen, with a whip in his hand, as if lashing the crowd of men. Then they went back into the house. Before morning, Grimhild died; a coffin was made for her body. The same day the men went out to fish, and Thorstein the Swarthy accompanied them to the fishing stations: when dawn appeared, he went down to see how much they had caught. Thorstein Eirekson sent a messenger after him, desiring him to return, for that his wife Grimhild did not lie quiet. He came and laid her straight." Or, as the other account relates it,—the main facts being the same: \*— "Grimhild died; and, when she was dead, Thorstein went out to fetch a plank on which to lay her body. Gudrid said to him, 'You will not be long, Thorstein?' He promised to return immediately. Then said Thorstein Eirekson, 'There is something remarkable about Grimhild, for she stirs on her couch, and her foot moves as if seeking to touch the ground.' Just then, Thorstein, the host, returned, and, at the same moment, Grimhild fell back with such violence that every beam in the house creaked. Then Thorstein made a coffin for Grimhild, and placed her therein.

"At the close of the same day, Thorstein Eirekson died, and Gudrid his wife was much afflicted. Then † Thorstein the Swarthy desired Gudrid to retire and rest

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 51.

† Antiq. Am. p. 126.

herself, for that he would watch by the dead body. He\* endeavored to comfort and console her in every mode, and promised that he would take her, together with the dead body of her husband Thorstein, and those of all his men, to Eireksficrd; 'and I will also,' he added, 'send for some friends here to comfort you.' She thanked him. At this moment, Thorstein Eirekson rose and cried, — 'Where is Gudrid?' Thrice he repeated these words, and then was silent; — or, according to the other account, † which is, upon the whole, probably the most correct, though the difference is very slight; — "Thorstein Eirekson called for Gudrid, saying that he wished to speak to her. Thorstein the Swarthy went to Gudrid, roused her, and, having desired her to mark herself with the cross, and to ask the aid of her God, he told her what Thorstein Eirekson had said; — 'He wishes you to go to him: — so determine whether you will or no, for I do not know how to advise you.' She answered, — 'Perhaps this extraordinary circumstance has reference to some events of futurity. I trust that God will protect me, and I will, therefore, under his mercy, venture to go to my husband and hear what he wishes to say.'"

I hardly understand all this, said Mr. Cassall. Did they imagine that these marvels took place after the deaths of the parties?

Undoubtedly that was their idea. Thus the motions of Grimhild caused astonishment, because it was thought that she had been dead before, whereas, doubtless, she had not. And so with respect to Thorstein. It was imagined that he had died, when he had only become tempora-

\* Antiq. Am. p. 52.

† Antiq. Am. p. 126. Cf. through remainder, the two narratives together.

rily insensible through weakness. On his recovery, he called for his wife ; but, all having thought him dead, this dread and hesitation were occasioned ; hence, the air of mystery thrown over the whole transaction, and the prophetic character which was given to his words in the repetition. The account proceeds :—

“ ‘ I will go to my husband, and hear what he wishes to say, for I shall be unable, at any rate, to escape it if it forebodes evil. The matter may be of importance.’ Then Gudrid went to Thorstein. He seemed to her to pour forth tears. He spoke a few words in a low tone to her, which none but herself could hear ; afterwards he spoke as follows, in the hearing of all :\*— ‘ They are blessed who hold the (Christian) faith, for they will have salvation and mercy ; and yet many observe the faith but ill ; for it has been the custom here, in Greenland, from the time that Christianity was first introduced, that men should be buried in unconsecrated ground, few funeral rites being performed. I wish that you should carry me, and the other men who have died, and bury us in a consecrated church.’ He also foretold to her something of her future lot, indicating that a high destiny awaited her ; and he besought her not to marry any man of Greenland. He desired her to bestow a part of his money on a church, and a part on the poor. Having thus spoken, he expired.

“ It had been the custom in Greenland, from the introduction of Christianity, that the dead should be buried on the farms where they died, the ground being unconsecrated, and merely a stake driven into the ground over the breast of the deceased. Afterwards, when the priests

---

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* pp. 53 and 128.

came, the stake was drawn out, and holy water poured in, and funeral rites, though so late, performed.

“Thorstein the Swarthy\* did all that he had promised. In the following spring, (A. D. 1006,) he sold his farm and cattle, and carried Gudrid and all her property down to the ship. He fitted out the ship and manned it, and went to Eireksfiord. The bodies of Thorstein and of the others were there buried in the church, with proper funeral rites. Gudrid betook herself to Leif, at Brattahlid. Thorstein the Swarthy took upon himself the management of a farm in Eireksfiord, and dwelt there as long as he lived, much respected.”

Thus ends the history of Thorstein.

Poor Thorstein! said Mr. Cassall. Really, the sons of Eirek were, with the exception of Leif, most unfortunate. Well might he be called Leif the Lucky, for he escaped those dangers to which each of his brothers fell a victim.

And, pray, what does the doctor think of these portions of the narrative? asked Mr. Norset, with a smile.

O, remarked the doctor, you said you did not require me to believe all that is here told; and so I have not troubled myself to point out the gross and obvious absurdities as you proceeded.

Do you think you should have had hard labor to perform if you had done so?

Yes, indeed; a parcel of silly nonsense!

Well, doctor, do you think that there is any thing in this last portion of the narrative, — you admitted that the story of Gudrid bore about it the character of truth, — that may not very easily be explained by reference to simple and well-known natural phenomena?

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 54.



Certainly not, answered the doctor, contemptuously; who can doubt it. Is it not, therefore, most absurd to pretend to put any faith in a tale which contains such marvels made out of nothing at all?

There, doctor, you and I come to quite different conclusions. You acknowledge that there is nothing here but what is explicable by reference to simple natural phenomena. And you know, as well as I do, what superstitions prevailed in the age in which these circumstances are recorded to have taken place, and, indeed, till a much later period. You know how easy it is to throw a supernatural air over very many natural phenomena, and how constantly it was done in that age. Well, then, it certainly amounts to a very great proof of the authenticity and perfect truth of both the narratives in which these details are contained, when we find that all the facts narrated, even in this part, although a superstitious air of supernaturality is thus thrown over them, are yet, every one of them, perfectly simple and explicable, and likely to have occurred. They are not wondrous prodigies, such as a "Tale of the Genii" contains, but simple, probable phenomena, viewed and recorded by a superstitious mind, and tinged, in the record, with the hue in which he viewed them.

Humph! said the doctor; you contrive to turn every thing to the support of your own view of the question.

Nay, doctor; it is no *turning*. Such is, unfortunately for you, the natural tendency of *truth*. All its parts cohere, and mutually establish and support each other.

Does this, then, bring us to the close, asked Mr. Cas-sall, of the narrative of Eirek the Red, and his sons?

It brings us to the close of all the most important particulars of that narration. There is an account given of an expedition to Vinland of FREYDIS, the daughter of

Eirek, and her husband THORVARD, accompanied by two brothers, HELGI and FINNBOGI, merchants from Norway. This expedition did not occur till six years after that of Thorstein, (A. D. 1011,) and until after the return of Thorfinn. It will be hardly worth while to occupy our time with the details of this expedition, however, since no fresh discoveries are recorded, and nothing is exhibited to us but the character of a cruel and hard-hearted woman, reckless of her conduct, and mindful only of the gain she made. By her treachery the brothers and their whole company were destroyed, and their vessel, which was larger than her husband's, was seized and laden. Her conduct was subsequently made known to Leif by some of her own company, and his justly excited anger was only restrained from inflicting the punishment due to her crimes, by the consideration of the ill effect which it would have upon the dignity of his family. He contented himself with pronouncing his opinion of her conduct, and withholding from her children all places of trust and honor.

Then we proceed next to the "*account of Thorfinn?*"

We will do so this afternoon or to-morrow. Our present discussion has already occupied almost the whole of this morning. It has been protracted much longer than I expected.

I am most anxious to hear the narrative of Thorfinn. Is there much contained in it which has not been detailed in the preceding narratives? or does he make any fresh explorations?

Both these. The whole narrative is different in many respects, and, perhaps, more interesting; and there are several fresh facts recorded with respect to the regions explored by Eirek's sons, which are valuable and interesting.

Then I think we had better devote this afternoon to the continuation of the subject. I am certainly very anxious to hear something more of Gudrid, and to become acquainted with the heroes of the next expedition. What says the doctor?

With all my heart. We will have it this afternoon, if you please, said the doctor, carelessly.

Pray don't trouble yourself to be present, doctor, if you find it tiresome.

O yes, I will come. One may as well hear the whole of the story out.

Now, seriously and soberly, doctor, said Mr. Norset, do you mean to say that you can any longer have the slightest doubt that the Northmen did discover and explore, to a great extent, the shores of the continent of North America? — You have been compelled to acknowledge their discovery of Greenland, and thus, in fact, of America. — Or do you pretend to doubt that they explored, and not only so, but that they fixed their abode on, the shores of NEW ENGLAND, five centuries before the discoveries and expeditions of Christoval Colon?

Ah! well, well, said the doctor, — apparently not well pleased to be called upon for a straight-forward answer, — I don't know; perhaps there may be something in it; perhaps they did come here; I suppose they did.

### CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI in *Greenland*, (A. D. 1006.)—  
Marriage with GUDRID, (1006-7.)—Expedition to *Vinland*, (1007.)  
—Arrival at *Kialarness*, (Cape Cod.)—Winters (1007-8) in  
*Straumfiord*, (Buzzard's Bay.)—SNORRI THORFINN SON born  
there, (1007.)—Thorfinn passes on to *Hóp*, (Rhode Island,) (1008.)  
—Winters there, (1008-9.)—Indian Traditions and Names.  
—Thorfinn encounters the Natives, (1009.)—Sails up the river  
(to Providence.)—Returns to *Straumfiord*, (1009.)—Expedition  
along the Eastern Coast, (1009.)—Winters at *Straumfiord*, (1009-  
10.)—Returns to *Greenland*, (1010.)—Two Natives taken on  
way home.—Destruction of BLARNI GRIMOLFSON.—Thorfinn  
settles at *Glaumba*, in *Iceland*.

WHAT! doctor,—you are beforehand with me this afternoon! exclaimed Mr. Norset, entering the room.

Beforehand with you!—here Mr. Cassall and I have been waiting for you this half hour, at least: what have you been about?

Who could have dreamed, doctor, that you were so very impatient to hear the continuation of these narratives, that you must come here directly after dinner? I took my hat for half an hour, and have been sauntering beyond the old fort, here on the Point, indulging my fancy with visions of the doings of the Northmen, when they visited this neighborhood. Doubtless their footsteps traversed this very part of the island.

Indulging your fancy, aye? said the doctor; observe that, Mr. Cassall.

Well, doctor, and what of that? asked Mr. Norset.

O, nothing, nothing, said the doctor, carelessly;

only indulging your *fancy* a little ;— quite necessary in the matter of these Northmen, you know.

Ah, ah, doctor, I understand you ; but you will not be able to hang a very weighty argument upon that hook. Did you never read of the landing of the Pilgrim fathers ?

Certainly, I have.

And did your imagination never conjure up the scene, with all the distinct vividness almost of reality ? If not, I fear that you took little interest in the narrative.

Yes ; I believe the scene passed before my mind's eye.

And did you ever doubt the reality and truth of the narrative itself, because thus your fancy drew from it a picture ?

I cannot say that I did.

Neither, then, can you take any exception, in the present case, to the truth and perfect historical authenticity of these facts, because my fancy has been roaming free, and conjuring up scenes which, if those narratives are true, must have had a probable existence,—if they are not true, can never have existed. The very wandering of the imagination, in this case, is dependent upon the established truth of the narrations, inasmuch as the mind cannot conceive of the vivid reality of the scenes, unless fully convinced, first, of the indubitable truth of the facts upon which those scenes must have depended for their possible existence. Almost the whole pleasure, in such wanderings of the fancy, consists in the accompanying conviction of their truth. But, however, you are impatient to hear the continuation of the narrative, I perceive, by your taking your station here so early.

The doctor made no reply, but commenced twirling his spectacles round between his finger and thumb, to the imminent hazard of the arm which was thus converted into the axle. His motions betrayed evident symptoms

of impatience, though he was unwilling to make acknowledgment of its existence.

We shall not occupy quite so much time this afternoon as we did this morning, observed Mr. Norset, since the NARRATIVE OF THE EXPEDITION OF THORFINN will alone fall under our notice, with but few other incidental facts. This narrative is somewhat longer, it is true, than any of those, taken singly, which we have already examined. Its details will, however, I think, be sufficiently interesting to compensate for its greater length.

One word before you begin, interposed the doctor. You said, I think, that the particulars of this narrative are contained only in the "*account of Thorfinn?*"

Not so, answered Mr. Norset. I stated that the fullest details are given in the "*account of Thorfinn.*" A sketch of the transactions is given in the "*account of Eirik the Red, and of Greenland,*" in which all the *main facts* are the same, but only very brief details are given. The cause of this, and the internal proof which it affords of the authenticity of the documents, and truth of the narratives, I have already explained.\*

O! that is the state of the case, is it? I remember, now, that you did allude to these circumstances. Are there any other authorities given in that volume for the facts detailed in this narrative?

There are, — as in the case of the principal narratives contained in the "*account of Eirik the Red, and of Greenland,*" — several extracts given from other documents, in which allusion is made, more or less in detail, to the expedition of Thorfinn. There is, moreover, another detailed account of many of the circumstances of the expedition added to the main narrative, in which the

---

\* See, ante, chap. i. p. 31, &c. and chap. ii. p. 53, &c. and p. 148.

correspondence in statements is very exact: some few minute particulars alone differ. The document whence this latter is printed professes to be a copy,—it is a manuscript,—of a much more ancient manuscript. The originals of each of these two documents were, in all probability, the committal to writing of the same tradition.

Very well, sir; we will see what appearance of authenticity is exhibited. Pray commence.

You are quite impatient, doctor. We will pursue the same plan with this as with the former narratives, and discuss any points which may arise, as we proceed. I must observe that the events detailed in this narrative commence very soon after the point of time to which the last narrative which we discussed this morning,—that of Thorstein,—carried us, namely, about the time of the return of Gudrid to Brattahlid, in the spring of 1006. It is necessary to remember this, in order to the ascertainment of the date of Thorfinn's expedition. Before arriving at the narrative of the expedition itself, we have a few words on the race and country, and other particulars, of Thorfinn himself. The account commences thus:—\*

“There was a man named THORD, who lived at Hofd,† in Hofdastrand, (north of Iceland.) He married FRIDGERD, daughter of THORER the IDLE, and of FRIDGERD, daughter of KIARVAL, king of the Irish. THORD was the son of BIARNI BUTTER-TUB, son of THORVALD, son of ASLEIK, son of BIARNI IRONSIDES, son of RAGNAR LODBROK (Hairy-breeches.) THORD and FRIDGERD had a son

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 130.

† This place, with most others mentioned in the narratives contained in this volume, will be found marked in the map affixed to Henderson's Iceland. Most of the localities in Iceland still retain their ancient names.

named SNORRI, who married THORHILD the PARTRIDGE, daughter of THORD the LOUD. They had a son named THORD HORSEHEAD. THORFINN KARLSEFNI was his son, whose mother's name was THORUNN."

Well, cried the doctor, whose eyes had rolled, and whose face had moved in singular contortions, during the recital of these names, what extraordinary surnames they did give to their ancestors. *Biarni Butter-Tub!* This was for the sake of distinction, I suppose?

Exactly so, said Mr. Norset.

The titles were more appropriate than elegant, that is certain, rejoined the doctor.

"THORFINN occupied his time in mercantile expeditions, and was esteemed a skilful merchant. One summer he fitted out his ship for a voyage to Greenland, accompanied by SNORRI THORBRANDSON, of Alptafjord, and a company of forty men. There was a man named BIARNI GRIMOLFSON, of Breidafjord, and another named THORHALL GAMLASON, of Austfjord. These men fitted out a ship, at the same time, to go to Greenland. They had also a company of forty men. This ship, and that of Thorfinn, as soon as they were ready, put out to sea. It is not recorded," (that is, by the Saga-men, or tradition bearers,) "how long they were on the voyage: it is only stated that both ships arrived at Eireksfjord in the autumn of that year, (1006.) Leif and others rode down to the ship, and friendly greetings took place on both sides."

I must here remark, said Mr. Norset, that, in the "*account of Thorfinn*," the name of *Eirek* occurs instead of that of Leif.

Ah! said the doctor, leaning forward, as if to seize the statement with avidity, in the hope of being able to impeach the credit of the narrative.



Don't be in too great a hurry, doctor, continued Mr. Norset, smiling; there is nothing very wonderful about it. In the other account the name of *Leif* occurs throughout, and it is evident that the occurrence of that of *Eirek*, in the "*account of Thorfinn*," is only an error of ignorance or carelessness. As, in the "*account of Eirek*," there are contained certain errors as to the family of *Thorfinn*, which no Icelander would have made, so, in the "*account of Thorfinn*," there are contained certain errors as to the family of *Eirek* which no Greenlander would have made. *Eirek* had died five winters previously, and *Leif* had succeeded to his place and rank. The narrator of the "*account of Thorfinn*," knowing that the name of *Eirek* occurred in one connection, and knowing that he was the founder of, and principal man in the colony of Greenland, doubtless considered the name of *Leif* only an error for the name of his father, being unacquainted with the particulars of *Eirek's* death. You will, of course, doctor, particularly observe that these errors, so palpable upon comparison of the two accounts, would never have been found in a *fabrication*. They affect, however, no single fact of the narrative; they are unimportant, except inasmuch as that they stamp the records in which they are contained with that proof of authenticity which consists in evidence of a diversity of authors, places, and times, in the origin of particular documents, between which, nevertheless, an absence of all concert is manifest, at the same time that a congruity is present in all the main facts narrated.

This error would certainly have seemed an inconsistency, remarked Mr. Cassall, but for this explanation, which undoubtedly makes the fact bear strongly in proof of the authenticity of both the documents. It is some-

thing like the case, though perhaps not quite so marked, of the duke of Argyll, quoted by Paley.

Go on, said the doctor, condescendingly ;—Leif or Eirek ;—it is not of much use caviling about a single name.

• Especially, said Mr. Norset, when it cannot be done with any show of reason or argument.

“ Leif and others came down to the ship, and friendly interchanges took place. The captains requested Leif to accept whatever he chose to take of their merchandise. Leif, in return, entertained them handsomely, and invited the chief men in both ships to spend the winter with him at Brattahlid. They accepted his invitation with many thanks. Then their goods were carried to Brattahlid, where they themselves had every entertainment which they could desire ; wherefore their winter quarters pleased them much.

“ As the feast of YULE (Christmas) drew nigh, Leif became silent and low-spirited, more than he was wont. Thorfinn said to him, ‘ Are you ill, friend Leif ? we think that you do not seem in your usual spirits. You have entertained us most hospitably, for which we are anxious to render you all the service in our power. Tell me what it is that ails you ! ’ ‘ You have received what I have been able to offer you,’ said Leif, ‘ in the kindest manner, and there is no idea in my mind that you have been deficient in any courtesy ; but I fear lest, when you go elsewhere, it may be said that you never witnessed a Yule feast so meanly celebrated as that which approaches, at which you will be entertained by Leif of Brattahlid ! ’

“ ‘ That shall never be the case, friend,’ answered Thorfinn. ‘ We have abundant stores in the ship ; take of these as much as you need, and prepare a feast as magnificent as you please.’ Leif accepted his offer, and

the Yule commenced ; and so well were Leif's arrangements made, that all were astonished that such a sumptuous feast could be provided in so poor a country. After the Yule, Thorfinn began to treat with Leif as to the marriage of Gudrid ; Leif being the person to whom the right of betrothment belonged. Leif gave a favorable ear to his advances, saying that she must necessarily fulfil that destiny which fate had appointed, and that he had heard nothing of Thorfinn but what was honorable. In the end, Thorfinn Karlsefni married Gudrid, and their nuptials were celebrated at Brattahlid during this same winter," (1006—7.) The date is ascertained from the circumstance of its being mentioned in the "account of Eirek," &c. that Thorfinn and his companions arrived in Greenland in the *summer of the same year* as that in which Gudrid returned to Brattahlid after the death of Thorstein.

"The conversation frequently turned, at Brattahlid, on the discovery of Vinland the Good ; many saying that an expedition there held out a fair prospect of gain. At length Thorfinn and Snorri made preparations for going on an expedition thither in the following spring, (1007.) Biarni Grimolfson and Thorhall Gamlason, already mentioned, determined to accompany them. Thorvard, the husband of Freydis, the daughter of Eirek, went with them, as also did Thorvald Eirekson."

Thorvald Eirekson ! said the doctor ; I thought he had been killed some time before ?

Do you not remember, answered Mr. Norset, that I mentioned this case, yesterday,\* as one in which the main facts related in the two accounts were the same, but with some difference in the particulars ? We shall

---

\* Ante, p. 32.

find an account of the death of Thorvald related in this narrative, in nearly the same manner as it is related in the "account of Eirek." It is most probable that some confusion of names exists here, for, in the second "*account of Thorfinn*,"\* it is stated that "Thorvald, a kinsman of Eirek, went with Thorfinn." There can, therefore, be little doubt that there was some Thorvald, a relation of Eirek, who did go with Thorfinn, and that the narrator of the "*account of Thorfinn*," being unacquainted with the particulars of Eirek's family, has confused this Thorvald with Thorvald the *son* of Eirek, and so placed the particulars of the death of the latter, which he had heard, to the account of the former, who was not the *son*, but the *kinsman* of Eirek.

I now remember your mentioning this variation in the accounts, said the doctor. I had forgotten it. I will give you the benefit of your explanation.

Truly, I am greatly indebted to your generosity, said Mr. Norset, with assumed humility.

"They were also accompanied by Thorhall, commonly called the Hunter, who had, for many years, been the huntsman of Eirek during the summer, and his steward during the winter. This Thorhall was a man of gigantic stature and of great strength, and swarthy in complexion: he was a man of very few words, and when he did speak it was chiefly in a bantering manner: he was given to evil counsel, and had been ill affected to Christianity ever since its introduction into Greenland. He possessed, however, much knowledge of uninhabited lands. He was in the same ship with Thorvard and Thorvald. These latter made use of the ship which had

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 168. When the *second* account of Thorfinn is mentioned, reference is always made to the additional account mentioned, ante, p. 154.

brought Thorbiorn from Iceland.”\* So that this expedition consisted of three ships. “There were in all,” — look, doctor, and Mr. Cassall, — this number of men, — “CXL.”

And, pray, why do you write that number down on paper in Roman numerals, instead of stating it in straight forward language? asked the doctor.

Because, answered Mr. Norset, ‘thereby hangs a tale.’

The doctor and Mr. Cassall both looked somewhat puzzled.

Nothing very much out of the way, doctor; only it is desirable to call your attention to the fact. Had I said 140, in plain English, it would have mislead you; — and, had I said 160, without noticing the mode in which the number is recorded, it would not have been strictly candid.

But do you mean to say, asked Mr. Cassall, that 140 and 160 are the same?

Certainly not; but I mean to say that the Roman numerals, “CXL,” mean in this place 160, whereas, you might have taken them to mean 140: some explanation thus becomes necessary. The doctor may be aware that the *hundred* usually comprised, among the northern nations, in the middle ages, six score, or 120.

I know that it sometimes did.

It is to be presumed, then, that such is its meaning in this place.

Ah! ah! ‘it is to be presumed,’ aye? — and what may

\* Thorbiorn must have reached Greenland in the course of the year 1001, since his family were Christians, and Christianity was not introduced into Iceland till 1000, and he reached Greenland before Eirek died, which was in the winter of 1001—2. This date agrees well with all the incidental particulars mentioned concerning him and his family.

be the reason of that, sir? I imagine you say that it is to be presumed to indicate 120 in this place, in order to fit some theory, or accord with some other statements. This is suspicious.

You are welcome to your suspicions, doctor. They are groundless. There is no theory to support, for, in every one of the documents, of any kind, wherein numerals occur, they are found to be expressed in *Roman*, and not in *Arabic* numerals.\* The question is simply one of fact. The Roman numeral C, may signify either 100 or 120; that is, either the *short hundred* of five score, or the *long hundred* of six score. The question is, whether the short or the long hundred is here signified:—

Pardon me, interrupted Mr. Cassall; I never heard of *short* and *long* hundred before. I thought the hundred always consisted of five score.

By no means. The hundred very commonly, if not generally, in use among the Northern European nations, formerly comprised 120, or six score. Indeed, this computation is not out of use at the present day, even in England, by the name of the "*long hundred*." Certain articles are still always sold, in certain parts of the country, by the long hundred. In avoirdupois weight, the hundred, in England, always consists of five score and a dozen, or 112;—and so it did in the United States until recently; as you know. A ton of coal, in England, now contains 240 pounds, or nearly one eighth more than the same nominal weight does in the United States. This shows that *one hundred* does not always consist of five score.

Then you imagine that, in this case, Thorfinn had with him 160 men, and not 140?

Such would seem to have been the case, according to

---

\* See *Antiq. Am.* p. 462.

the known common usage of the hundred by the Northern nations of that date. Pray observe, however, that this interpretation is made with no reference to any thing whatever, except the point of fact. Whether it means 160 or 140, is a matter of not the slightest importance to the narrative, or the other facts. It is not a little absurd, therefore, to raise an objection, as some of the reviews have done, — and which is a proof of the non-perusal of this volume, by their authors, — against this interpretation, and mark it as an impeachment of the truth of the narrative. Such an objection is not quite so rational or well founded as if any one were to object to the authenticity of the whole Roman history, because Quintilian gives us to understand\* that Cicero's name was always pronounced, among his contemporaries, as *Kikero*, whereas, we are accustomed to pronounce it with the C soft. We will now proceed with the narrative: —

“ There were one hundred and sixty men in all. They took with them all kinds of live stock, for they designed to colonize the land. Thorfinn asked Leif to give him the dwellings which he had erected in Vinland. Leif told him that he would grant him the use of them, but that he could not give them to him.†

“ Then they sailed to Westbygd, and thence to Bjarney; — ”

And what and where is Bjarney? asked the doctor.

The name Bjarney, literally *bear island*, seems to have been indifferently applied to many islands. Thus the present isle of Disco was called Bjarney; and we have mention presently made of another island, called Bjarney, at a great distance from Disco. The Bjarney just mentioned was probably one of the numerous islands on the

\* Quint. de Inst. Orat. lib. i.

† Antiq. Am. Cf. p. 57.

coast of Labrador, upon which they would naturally touch on their way from Westbygd to Helluland,\* or Newfoundland. That this was the case, is rendered probable from the fact that they were only two days in sailing from Bjarney to Helluland. It is obvious that it could not have been Disco, since that island lies far to the north of Westbygd, and would have been far, indeed, out of their course in going to Vinland.

“Thence they sailed for two days towards the south. Land being seen, they put out a boat, and explored. They found vast flat stones, many of which were twelve ells broad. There was a great number of foxes there.” You perceive that this description coincides precisely in fact, though expressed in different terms, with that of Leif. We have modern descriptions of this region, which, besides according, as we have seen, with the general tenor of these descriptions, make particular mention of the large flat stones.†

Go on, said the doctor ; I want Thorfinn to reach Vinland ; and I do not intend to detain you much before you carry him there, unless we come to something very outrageous. I will not complain of this description. We all know that there are plenty of foxes in that region.

I dare say, answered Mr. Norset, that you will find work for yourself before we reach Vinland ; for we have some particulars concerning the intervening region which we have not before had. But, to proceed ; — though I

---

\* It is worthy of observation, however, that the whole of the coast of Labrador, and the northern coast of North America to the west of Greenland, was called, by the ancient Icelandic geographers, (whose writings are still in existence,) HELLULAND, being distinguished, however, from the present Newfoundland by the addition *Helluland it Mikla*, or GREAT HELLULAND, whereas the island was simply *Helluland*, or *Lilla Helluland*.

† Antiq. Am. p. 419.



should remark that the narrator of this expedition, being anxious to give all the honor he could to Thorfinn, makes him bestow names on all the places visited;—whereas, we have seen that Leif and Thorvald first named the different lands: these names Thorfinn, of course, learned during his stay with Leif, — which stay, as well as Leif's expedition, is recorded in all the narratives. The same names are bestowed on the different lands in each account.

“They called that land Helluland. Thence they sailed two days in a southerly course, and came to a land covered with wood, and in which were many wild animals. *Beyond this land, to the southeast*, lay an island, on which they killed a bear. They called the island Bjarney, and the land Markland.”\*

Bjarney, said Mr. Cassall, must be Cape Sable Isle. The situation of that island corresponds exactly with the description. I suppose that Thorfinn first touched on Nova Scotia in a more northerly part than Leif, as he reached it in two days. He would then coast along till Bjarney was reached.

Most probably your conjecture is correct; but you perceive that the details here are meagre, not being so full as in the account of Leif's voyage. The express object of Thorfinn was to reach Vinland; and he evidently did not trouble himself much about intervening lands, nor was he so careful in the description of them as the other navigators. As far as he goes, he corroborates the statements of these others. His meagreness in this part of the narrative is an incidental proof of the genuineness of the whole, since we know that his avowed destination was Vinland. I beg your particular attention to what immedi-

---

\* *Gaspar de Corte Real*, who touched on Nova Scotia in 1501, called it *Terra Verde*, a name very similar in meaning to the Norse, *Markland*.

ately follows, as it opens a description which we have not before had.

“Thence, (that is, from the island Bjarney,) they sailed towards the south for *two days*,\* and arrived at a ness, or promontory of land. They sailed along the shores of this promontory, the land lying to the starboard. These shores were extensive and sandy. They made for land, and found on the ness the keel of a ship,” (doubtless the same that Thorvald had set up there;) “wherefore they called the place Kialarness. And they called the shores FURDUSTRANDIR, (*shores of great length, or wonderful shores*,) because the coasting along them seemed tiresome,” on account of their desertness.

We have reached Kialarness again, at last, said the doctor. Is Thorfinn’s Kialar-ness the same as Thorvald’s?

Undoubtedly. Mark the description, and you can have no doubt about the matter. They sail southward for two days from Cape Sable Isle, off Nova Scotia, and come to a ness, or neck of land, which, sailing on, they keep to the right hand of the ship. Does not this exactly correspond to the neck of Cape Cod?

And what, then, is the meaning of the long sandy shores, and why did not Thorvald allude to these?

Both these questions are easy to answer; but we will, if you please, take the last first. Do you not remember that Thorvald was driven along these coasts by a tempest, and only ran aground at the extremity of the cape? He had something else to do then, than examine the nature of the coast as he was driven past; and he could not, probably, have discovered its aspect, if he had looked, in that state of the weather. None other besides Thorvald and Thorfinn coasted this cape, as far as we are informed in these records; and the circumstance of

---

\* Cf. Antiq. Am. pp. 170 and 139.

Thorvald's having been *driven past by a tempest*, and the narrator of his voyage *not describing it*, while Thorfinn *coasted leisurely along*, and the narrator of his voyage thus more carefully *describing it*, is a strong internal evidence of the authenticity of each narrative.

But how do you explain the *long sandy shores*?

How do I explain it! You have never been down on Cape Cod, I presume, doctor, or you would not ask such a question?

No, I never was in that vicinity.

Then you may judge of the correctness of Thorfinn's description by the following fact. It was only last night that I was spending the evening with a friend in this neighborhood, and he happened to mention a journey he had made to Cape Cod to attend some meeting. In the course of his narration, he stated, without any question or allusion on my part, that he never was in such a desolate and dreary place in his life as Cape Cod. He said he never felt any thing like *Nostalgia* in his life, except three times. The strongest was while at Cape Cod; and so dreary and desolate did he find its desert sands, that he preferred returning home to Boston, where he then resided, twice in the course of three days, to staying on that coast during the interval. The same testimony is borne by all travellers. Hitchcock, in his Report on the Geology of Massachusetts, p. 96 &c. says of Cape Cod,—"The dunes, or sand-hills, which are often nearly or quite barren of vegetation, and of snowy whiteness, *forcibly attract attention, on account of their peculiarity*. As we approach the extremity of the Cape, the sand and barrenness increase; and, in not a few places, it would need only a party of Bedouin Arabs to cross the traveller's path, to make him feel that he was in the depths of an Arabian or Lybian desert."

Certainly, said Mr. Cassall, that is pretty strong confirmation of the correctness of Thorfinn's description. So they called it Furdustrandir, because of the extent of the coast.

So the account says, and well might they apply the term to a shore so long, barren, and monotonous. Its dreariness would necessarily make the passage by it appear particularly tiresome. The reason for the name, however, was probably added by the person who committed Thorfinn's narrative to writing. Furdustrandir means, literally, *wonderful shore*. This term *may* be derived from its remarkably tiresome length, but is, perhaps, hardly so likely to be so, as from another circumstance, which is, indeed, a much more *wonderful* circumstance attending that locality. Hitchcock, in the work just quoted, p. 98, remarks, — "In crossing the sands of the Cape, I noticed a singular mirage, or deception. In Orleans, for instance, we seemed to be ascending at an angle of three or four degrees, nor was I convinced that such was not the case, until, turning about, I perceived that a similar ascent appeared in the road just passed over." This phenomenon may have been observed by Thorfinn's party, — who, we know, must have landed here, as they found the keel standing on the neck, — and have given origin to the name Furdustrandir.

More probably than the other derivation of the word, I think, said the doctor. And where did they go after passing these "wonderful shores?"

"They afterwards came to a bay,\* and directed the course of their vessels into this bay."

---

\* The original here literally signifies "the land became *bay-ey*;" that is, had a bend inwards, so as to form a bay. The translation given expresses the sense correctly. See *Antiq. Am.* pp. 139 and 171.

That must be Nantucket Bay, remarked Mr. Cassall. They must necessarily reach that arm of the sea, after coasting the tongue of Cape Cod.

Doubtless you are correct, said Mr. Norset, as the following particulars of the narrative will very clearly show. I may remark that Thorfinn describes the whole of this coasting voyage with care. You have seen, and will presently see further, that he notices facts which are not related in any of the other narratives, while the descriptions in all the narratives are able to be identified with the same localities.

“King Olaf Tryggvason,” the same whom we saw that Leif visited,\* “had given to Leif two Scots, a man named Haki, and a woman named Hekia: they were swifter of foot than wild animals. These Leif had given to Thorfinn, and they were then in his ship. When they had passed beyond Furdustrandir, he put these Scots on shore, directing them to run over the country towards the southwest † for three days, and then return. They were very lightly clad. The ships lay to during their absence. When they returned, one carried in his hand a bunch of grapes, the other an ear of corn. They went on board, and then the ships proceeded on their course, until the land was intersected by another bay.”

That must necessarily be *Buzzard's Bay*, said Mr. Cassall, who, during the whole discussion of these narratives, kept the map constantly in his hand, following the course of the voyagers with his pencil.

Obviously so, said Mr. Norset.

“Outwards from this bay lay an island, on each side

---

\* See, ante, pp. 88 and 89.

† Cf. *Antiq. Am.* pp. 140 and 428.

of which there was a very rapid current. They called this island STRAUMEY, (isle of currents.) There was so great a number of eider ducks there, that they could hardly walk without treading on the eggs."\*

What island is this? inquired the doctor.

It must, I presume, have been either the present island of *Martha's Vineyard*, or the connected islands of *Cuttyhunk* and *Nashawenna*, between which, even now, a high shoal runs. Perhaps the latter locality is more probably correct than the former. Its correctness, however, supposes certain effects of the current, which I will notice presently.

And what is the meaning of the egg story, and the rapid current? Are either of these found here?

As to the eggs, it is the fact that the eider duck is still found in some of the islands of Massachusetts: † probably before the settlement of the country they abounded much more commonly than at present. You are aware, — or may be, by looking at the map, — that there are now islands in Buzzard's Bay and Nantucket Bay, and elsewhere on these coasts, called *Egg Islands*, which name can be derived from no other circumstance than the abundance of eggs found there, either now, or formerly.

They must have found this neighborhood offer com-

\* Precisely the same form of expression was recently made use of to the author, by a gentleman in Boston, who was describing some parts of Boston Bay during a certain season of the year, (the same as that in which Thorfinn reached Straumey.) The only difference was, that the eggs mentioned by this gentleman were those of gulls; those seen by Thorfinn are said to have been those of eider ducks.

† See annot. *ÆDR*, in *Antiq. Am.* p. 444, being a quotation from *Ebelings* "Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika," (1794,) i. p. 210.

fortable quarters, I should think, said the doctor. They had better have stayed here.

They appear to have been somewhat of your opinion, doctor; for they did pitch their tent in the neighborhood of Buzzard's Bay for a time.

You have not explained the *rapid currents*, said the doctor.

These rapid currents were occasioned by the *Gulf Stream*, the course of which, passing northward from the Gulf of Mexico, lies at no great distance from the whole of the eastern coast of the United States, and is known to have lain still nearer to this coast in former times than at present. A glance at the map will show you that it must, even now, produce the effects described around all the islands in this neighborhood, and remarkably so up Buzzard's Bay. That this is the case will be seen by inspecting the modern accounts of these localities.\* I even heard a gentleman remark, the other day, not having the slightest reference to the topic before us, that many captains, who had crossed the Atlantic fifty times without a single qualm, were made sea-sick immediately on entering the waters in this neighborhood. It is, moreover, a known fact to geologists, that the Gulf Stream is turned to the eastward by the shoals of Nantucket.† It is to be observed that this current has necessarily had some effect upon the condition of the land in these regions. Some changes have taken place within the memory of man. It is very probable that some of the islands in this neighborhood were formerly connected with the main land; perhaps the whole string of islands extending from the southwestern extremity of the

---

\* *Antiq. Am.* p. 428, note c.

† See Lyell's *Geology*, 5th London edition, vol. i. p. 384.

peninsula of Cape Cod, below Falmouth, formerly composed a portion of the main land of that peninsula.

What have these changes to do with this subject?

They are very clearly connected with it. Thus, — supposing that, at the time of these voyages, this string of islands, with the exception of Cuttyhunk and Nashawenna, the connection of which with the main land may probably be referred to a still more remote period, was formerly connected with the main land, — it appears very natural that Leif and Thorvald, who did not coast along, as Thorfinn appears to have done, should have passed Buzzard's Bay, without sailing up it, or noticing these islands. Again, the present narration speaks of *an island*. There is the island of Martha's Vineyard, to be sure, much larger than any of the others, — and it is, indeed, very probable that Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket were formerly connected, — but there are several other islands lying immediately at the mouth of the bay. They would probably have been noticed, had they existed.

Ah, said the doctor, I thought we should find that you would have recourse to a parcel of conjectures to support your tales.

You might think so, doctor; but your thoughts were still vain imaginings. I have had no recourse to any conjecture to support any tales. In the narrative before us, there is nothing inconsistent with the localities as they actually now exist; but, upon referring to certain changes, which the known laws of nature are calculated to have worked, we find the consistency and correctness of the narrative to be still more striking. Knowing what these laws of nature are, we know that what *is now* has been different in former times. Where is the sun at this moment?



Verging towards the west.

Do you thence infer that he has always been in that aspect?

To be sure not.

Why not? How can you know otherwise?

Because I know that his daily course is from east to west.

Then you know that a *change* is constantly taking place in his position, or rather in the position of the earth with respect to him. You know that his *past position* has been different from his present one. You would not, then, doubt any man's statement, because he said that, when a certain fact took place, the sun was in the east, although, when you now look, you see him in the west. The course of the Gulf Stream, and the effects produced by it, are regulated by laws as certain as is the course of the ecliptic. There is, therefore, no more *conjecture* in alluding to the changes which it must have produced in Buzzard's Bay, or elsewhere, than there is in alluding to the sun's eastward aspect this morning. I suppose you remember that

“Harry of Monmouth, Lancaster, and Derby,”

as Shakspeare styles him, succeeded to the throne of England in 1399?

Certainly, I do: — was he a Northman? added the doctor, with something like a sneer.

No, he was not a Northman, any more than all the Anglo-Saxon race are of the same stock with the Northmen of old; but you may perhaps remember, also, that this same Henry IV landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, which place was then a considerable port?

What of that, sir?

It may seem perhaps to you a curious and fanciful *con-*

*jecture*, but it is, nevertheless, a *fact*, that this very Ravenspur is now about two miles out in the ocean,\* and nothing but a sand-bank, which may be partly seen at low water. Now I beg you will never believe the page of English history again, because, in order to do so, you must have recourse to the *conjecture* that there was once *land*, and a *considerable town*, where now there are seen only the wasting waters of the ocean.

The doctor looked puzzled, and somewhat troubled. He briefly observed, — I never heard of that fact before.

It is a fact, nevertheless; and I could name a hundred such, along the eastern coast of England, — towns and villages, once existing, now far within the ocean. † Observe, this Ravenspur was in existence four hundred years ago, and now is looked for vainly. There is no current continually driving against that shore like the Gulf Stream against Martha's Vineyard and the coast of Massachusetts. It is upwards of eight hundred years since the Northmen navigated these waters. Certainly, then, it is no *conjecture* to speak of the changes which the coast must *necessarily* have undergone within that

\* See Lyell's *Geology*, vol. i. p. 402, and Camden's *Britannia*, (Gough's edition, folio,) vol. iii. p. 77. The reader will find mention in both these places, of various other towns washed away, some of them even since Camden's time. Among these are Auburn, Hartburn, Hyde, Owithorne, Kilnsen, Fismark, Tharlet-thorp, Redway, Penysthorp, Upsall, and Potterfleet.

† If the eye is cast along the map of the eastern coast of England, it cannot fail to be attracted by the very extensive shoals in *The Wash*, between Norfolk and Lincolnshires. Many towns and villages have here, too, disappeared. It is probable that, at no very distant date, the shoals between *Boston Deep*s and the coast of Lincoln were mainland. The course of the *Witham*, on which the ancient town of Boston stands, is clearly discernible through these shoals at the present day, and it seems probable that, at the time Boston first rose into existence, (before the eighth century,) it lay much farther from the ocean than at present.

time, or to allude to land submerged, and now appearing only in part, as islands. Nay, I have, as I mentioned this morning, the positive testimony of one of the oldest residents in the island of Nantucket to the fact, that the visible shoals of that island have undergone a remarkable change within his memory and observation; and that many islands, which formerly appeared above the water on those shoals, are now no longer seen. Is it, then, *conjecture* to speak of the likelihood of the former union of Martha's Vineyard with Nantucket, as also of that of the chain of islands off the southwest extremity of Cape Cod with the mainland? The effect of the current on this coast may be conceived from the fact which I have already noticed, that it is the Banks of Nantucket which turn the course of the Gulf Stream, at the depth of from two hundred to three hundred feet below the surface of the water.\*

The doctor was silent. He endeavored to look as if it were a matter of indifference to him, whether Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket were ever united or not. He appeared, however, quite relieved when, after a few moment's silence, Mr. Cassall inquired, — How do you account for the fact that neither Leif nor Thorvald remarked this current?

It is not difficult to account for this circumstance, answered Mr. Norset. In the first place, it is to be observed that Thorfinn's whole course, from the time he reached Kialarness, appears to have been carefully coasting along the shore, while both Leif and Thorvald,

---

\* Lyell's Geology, vol. i. p. 384. These very extensive banks will be seen represented in D'Anville's Atlas, Map of "Amerique Septentrionale." The reader cannot fail to perceive that the fact of these very extensive *lower* shoals strengthens the argument on ante pp. 99 and 100.

according to the accounts, stood out to open sea as far as they were able. The latter would not, therefore, observe the currents on each side of the island. It was on the north side of Nantucket that Leif landed, where these currents would not be visible. They did not pass up Buzzard's Bay at all, but crossed its mouth direct; and the current would thus not be noticed by them as any thing extraordinary, though it might have the effect of driving their vessel towards shore, and thus carrying them nearer to Seaconnet. Crossing these waters with a favorable wind, they would, not expecting the swell occasioned by the current, not distinguish this swell from that occasioned by the wind. The current would affect them but for a very short distance, since they did not, like Thorfinn, pass up and explore Buzzard's Bay. It was, doubtless, his experience in passing up and coasting along the shores of this bay, that directed his attention especially to the current. He would there experience its effects for a length of time, and perceive its continuance during the whole months of his stay on the coast. One thing, at any rate, is obvious, that this non-mention of the current by Leif and Thorvald, and the notice of it by Thorfinn, are evidences of the authenticity of each account, since such a palpable omission in the accounts of the two former would never have occurred in a fabrication.

That is clear, said Mr. Cassall. Let us now, if you please, proceed with the narrative.

The very next clause in the narrative is important, since it shows that it was, as I have just suggested, the circumstance of their passing up the bay, which called the attention of Thorfinn and his company to the current.

"They directed their course into this bay," and

---

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* pp. 141 and 173.

called it STRAUMFIORD, (that is, *Stream Bay*, or *Bay of Currents*.) Here they disembarked, and made preparations for remaining. They had carried out with them every kind of cattle, and found abundance of pasturage. The situation of this place was pleasant. They occupied their time chiefly in exploring the land. Here they passed the winter," (1007—8.) I must call your attention, in this place, to the fact, that a son was born to Thorfinn and Gudrid during the autumn of this year, after they had established themselves in their quarters on the shores of Straumfiord. This fact is not stated in this place, in the narrative, but it is stated subsequently.\* SNORRI THORFINN SON was thus born, in the present state of Massachusetts, in the year 1007, being the first, of European blood, of whose birth in America we have any record. From him the celebrated living sculptor, *Thorvaldson*, is lineally descended, besides a long train of learned and illustrious characters, who have flourished during the last eight centuries in Iceland and Denmark. We proceed now to the transactions of the winter; and here I must remark that the account of what passed during this winter is more carefully, and obviously more correctly, related in the extract appended to the "account of Thorfinn," than in that account itself.

How do you know that the former is the more correct? asked the doctor.

Simply because it is simple, and clear, and straightforward; whereas some words or lines seem omitted in the latter, which renders it not so clear. The main facts of the narrative are not affected by the difference in any way; so do not be alarmed, doctor.

"That winter was very severe," † — so you see that

\* Antiq. Am. p. 161.

† Antiq. Am. p. 174.

they had one severe winter here, — “and, as they had no stores provided, provisions ran short, for they could neither hunt nor fish. So they passed over onto the island, hoping that they might there find the means of subsistence, either in what they should catch, or what should be cast ashore. They found, however, little better means of subsistence there than before, though the cattle were somewhat better off. Then they prayed to God that he would send them food; which prayer was not answered so soon as they desired.

“About this time Thorhall was missing, and they went out to seek for him. Their search lasted for three days. On the morning of the fourth day, Thorfinn and Biarni Grimolfson found him lying on the top of a rock. There he lay, stretched out, with his eyes open, blowing through his mouth and nose, fidgeting about, and mumbling to himself. They asked him why he had gone there. He answered, — that it was no business of theirs; that he was old enough to take care of himself without their troubling themselves with his affairs. They asked him to return home with them, which he did.

“A short time after, a whale was cast ashore, —”

A whale! exclaimed the doctor; whales are not found there, I am sure.

You are mistaken, doctor; whales of some kinds are found there, and were formerly so in such abundance, that regular fisheries for them were carried on in those waters. There is a rock at the entrance of Narraganset Bay, called at this day *Whale Rock*, which must derive its name from that animal. It is the fact that whales do occasionally make their appearance, even now, in Narraganset Bay, and formerly they were common along the whole coast, but especially in Nantucket Bay and Buzzard's Bay. There is nothing wonderful, then, in

one of this species being cast ashore near Buzzard's Bay. The account of this whale which follows,—“they knew not what kind of whale it was; even Thorfinn, though well acquainted with whales, did not know it,”—is a curious and very strong internal proof of the truth and accuracy of the narrative; for it is also the fact that the whale which mostly frequents these waters is of a species which is seldom found in the waters of Greenland, &c. where the Northmen were accustomed to fish. It is the “*Right Whale*,” (*Balæna Mysticetus*.) The “*Fin-back*” (*Balæna Physalus*) was also formerly found in these waters.

“Very like a whale,” muttered the doctor, in an apparently abstracted mood.

Well, Hamlet and Polonius were of the same race as Thorfinn, said Mr. Norset, laughing; and probably the old man's vision in the clouds was the spirit of that whale which so much troubles you.

“A short time after, a whale was cast ashore, and they all ran down eagerly to cut it up; but none knew what kind of whale it was. Neither did Thorfinn, though well acquainted with whales, know this one. The cooks dressed the whale, and they all eat of it, but were all taken ill immediately afterwards.\* Then said Thorhall, ‘Now you see that Thor is more ready to give aid than your Christ. This food is the reward of a hymn which I composed to Thor, my god, who has rarely forsaken me.’ When they heard this, none would eat any more; and so they threw all the remainder of the flesh from the rocks, commending themselves to God.”

---

\* It must be presumed that this illness was occasioned at least as much by their eating heartily, after so long a scarcity, as by any unwholesome quality in the flesh of the whale.

I suppose, then, remarked Mr. Cassall, that this Thorhall was the only heathen among the company?

It would appear that almost all the Northmen had, ere this, been converted to Christianity. It is to be presumed, therefore, that all the rest of the company were Christians, especially as Thorhall is specified and distinguished as *not* being a Christian. It is worth while to observe, here, the singular inconsistency of these men, and how little of real Christianity there could be in them. They professed to believe in Christ and his religion as the only true one, and, of course, that no other gods save one could have existence; and yet, when they heard that a prayer to Thor had brought a gift, they were horrified; thus implying that they really did, notwithstanding their professed faith, believe in Thor, and in his power, and appearing to think that he divided empire with the only true God.

Well, observed the doctor, I should not have noticed this inconsistency; but it really is a striking one when considered. But history shows us that this was the very general idea of those who, in the middle ages, became converts. They seemed to think that the religion they adopted did little more than put one god in competition with another for the throne of universal power.

True, doctor; and the consideration is a sad one. It makes one feel strongly how little there is in the mere *name* of Christian, without the *spirit* and the knowledge which that pure religion should impart.

The narrative continues: — “They threw all into the sea, commending themselves to God. After which the air became milder; \* they were again able to go fishing; nor, from that time, was there any want of provisions,

---

\* Cf. *Antiq. Am.* pp. 143 and 176.



for there were abundance of wild animals hunted on the mainland, of eggs taken on the island, and of fish caught in the sea.

“And now they began to dispute as to where they should next go. Thorhall the Hunter wished to go north, round Furdstrandir and Kialarness, and so to explore Vinland. Thorfinn wished to coast along the shore towards the southwest, considering it as probable that there would be a more extensive tract of country the further south they went.\* It was thought more advisable that each should explore separately. Thorhall, therefore, made preparations at the island, his whole company consisting of nine only: all the others accompanied Thorfinn.

“One day, as Thorhall was carrying water to his ship, he drank and sang these verses,” — which are what I referred to this morning, when I stated that it was the expectation of procuring *wine* which induced one of Thorfinn’s companions to come here, — and which I may thus translate: —

I left the shores of Eireksfiord  
 To seek, oh cursed Vinland, thine,  
 Each warrior pledging there his word  
 That we should here quaff choicest wine.  
 Great Odin, Warrior God, see how  
 These water-pails I carry now;  
 No wine my lips have touched, but low  
 At humblest fountain I must bow.

---

\* Doubtless this idea was gained from the reports of Thorvald’s expedition south, and from the knowledge that in Europe the continent extended far to the south, whence Thorfinn judged, by analogy, that it would do so here. It shows, at any rate, how much more just ideas the Northmen had of the western continent than were entertained by Cölon.

“ When all was ready, and they were about to set sail, Thorhall sang : —

Now home our joyful course we 'll take,  
 Where friends untroubled winters lead :  
 Now let our vessel swiftly make  
 Her channel o'er the ocean's bed ;  
 And let the battle-loving crew  
 Who here rejoice, and praise the land, —  
 Let them catch whales, and eat them too,  
 And let them dwell in Furdustrand.\*

“ Thorhall's party then sailed northwards, round Furdustrandir and Kialarness. But when they desired to sail thence, westward, (as of course they must do, from Kialarness, in order to coast along the eastern shores of the continent, and as we saw that Thorvald did,) they were met by an adverse tempest, and driven off, on to the coast of Ireland, and there were beaten and made slaves ; and there, as the merchants reported, Thorhall died.”

What merchants were those ? asked the doctor.

The Icelanders traded much to Ireland, and the merchants of the two countries were, at that time, well known to each other. They were the greatest navigators of the age. We shall, by and by, have an account of some voyages between the two islands.

Whither did Thorfinn proceed, asked Mr. Cassall, after the desertion of Thorhall ?

“ Thorfinn, with Snorri Thorbrandson and Biarni Grimolfson, and all the rest of the company, sailed towards the southwest.” This was, necessarily, in the spring of 1008, since they had passed the preceding

---

\* *Furdustrandir* is merely the plural of *Furdustrand* ; so that the use of the singular here is perfectly legitimate.

winter (1007—8) on the shores of Straumfiord. You will remember that Thorfinn's party *coasted along* the whole way from Kialarness. They would do the same, in all probability, in sailing out of Straumfiord; and the numerous inlets in that bay would lengthen the course considerably. The strength of the opposing current would be another reason for their coasting in this case. "They went on for some time, until they came to a river, which, flowing from land, passed through a lake into the sea. They found sandy shoals there, so that they could not pass up the river except at high tide."

This exactly corresponds again, interrupted Mr. Cassall, to the former description of Pocasset River and Mount Hope Bay, and to the actual condition of those parts.

Precisely, answered Mr. Norset. It is obvious that Thorfinn would receive from Leif, — permission to make use of whose erections he had obtained, — an accurate account of the spot where he had dwelt, and would make for it, since its situation and produce were so advantageous. He would, without doubt, have with him some of the men who had accompanied Leif and Thorvald. It must be remarked that, in the "account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland," in the particulars respecting Thorfinn, it is expressly stated that he reached Leifsbudir, which statement, agreeing as it does with the description in the "account of Thorfinn," places the matter beyond a doubt.\*

"Thorfinn and his companions sailed up as far as the mouth of the river, (that is, necessarily, the point of its opening out into the lake,) and called the place HÓP."

Hóp! exclaimed Mr. Cassall, that is remarkable; the place is called Mount Hope Bay at this day.

---

\* For farther illustration of the necessity of this locality, see Antiq. Am. p. 432.

And it is well known, observed Mr. Norset, that that name is merely a corruption of the Indian name *Haup*, which word was pronounced in exactly the same manner as the Norse *Hóp*.\*

Halloo! cried the doctor; what theory are you going to build up now? Were the Indians the same as the Northmen?

It is to be presumed that they were not, doctor; but it does not follow that this coincidence in the name should not open to us some important light. We shall presently find that, though Thorfinn and Biarni Grimolfson returned to Iceland, there is no record that either of the other leaders who accompanied them, Thorhall Gamlason † or Snorri Thorbrandson, did so. It is not improbable that these, with their followers, remained.‡ They would necessarily, having no women among them, marry among the Indians; and though thus most traces of their origin would be lost in a few generations, yet some words and names and customs might be retained. I say this is highly probable. I do not want you to believe it for a fact. It is a fact, however, that the Indian name of this spot was the same with that given to it by the Northmen, — a name which designated, as we shall see, not only the lake, but the land adjoining it on either side. Whence the Indian name is derived is unknown, and what is its signification in their language is unknown. It is hardly probable, however, that such a coincidence in name would have been found without any connection, traditionary or otherwise, as I have suggested, between the parties applying the name. It is, moreover, a fact,

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 455.

† This Thorhall Gamlason must not be confused with Thorhall the Hunter.

‡ See this subject treated more fully in chap. v.

and a most important one in reference to the present subject, though the editor of the *Antiquitates Americanae* does not appear to have taken notice of it, notwithstanding the passage which records it is quoted by him, — that “*there was a tradition current with the oldest Indians (in these parts) that there came a wooden house and men of another country in it, swimming up the river Assoonet, as this (Taunton River) was then called, who fought the Indians with mighty success, &c.*” \*

Oh yes, said the doctor; a tradition made to suit the occasion.

No, doctor, you are quite wrong there; for this tradition is recorded, and I give it in the very words as recorded, in a work by Michael Lort, † vice-president of the (London) Antiquarian Society, and published in 1787, he having no idea of these discoveries of the Northmen, and making no use whatever of the tradition. It is, in that work, given as an extract from a letter dated more than half a century earlier. It is certainly a great pity that he did not detail the “*et cætera*” contained in that letter. They might have thrown some more light upon the matter before us. The tradition, as it stands, is one of much importance in corroboration of the present narrative.

Stay, said the doctor; what is that about “fighting the Indians with mighty success?” Did the Northmen ever fight the Indians?

They did, at this very place; and a great number of Indians were slain, as we shall see presently.

Well, said Mr. Cassall, this tradition is certainly a curious and important one. Is there any thing else in In-

\* See *Antiq. Am.* p. 374.

† *Archæologia*, vol. viii. p. 290, &c.

dian traditions, or words, or names, which throws light upon this matter?

This subject has not been sufficiently investigated. It is, however, the fact, that the name applied by these Indians to Cape Cod was almost precisely the same as the Norse term for the same promontory. The Northmen called it *Kialar-ness*, the *Kialar* being merely an adjective, descriptive of the kind of *NESS*; the latter term signifying simply *promontory*. This term *ness*\* is frequently found used, both by the Northmen of old, and in kindred lands at the present day, as descriptive of promontories; and was probably used alone as the common designation of this spot, the prefix *Kialar* being merely added to distinguish it from *Krossa-ness* and other *nesses*. Thus we have *Sheer-ness*, and *Dunge-ness*, in Kent; *Holder-ness*, the south-east promontory of Yorkshire; *Orford-ness*, in Suffolk, and many other *nesses* in England; while we have *Kaith-ness*, *Broom-ness*, *Tarbet-ness*, and innumerable other *nesses* in Scotland. In Iceland we find many tongues of land designated by the term *ness* alone, without any distinctive appellation. We find, indeed, this single appellation in England; thus, there is *The Naze*, (which word is the same as *ness*,) a considerable promontory in Essex, which resembles in shape almost precisely the *Kialar-ness* in question. There is also *Lindes-nas*, more commonly called simply *The Naze*, at the southern extremity of Norway. In Scotland we also find *Ness Head*, &c. The Indian name for the *ness* in question was *nauset*, or *nesset*, the obvious resemblance of which term to

---

\* In *Old Bailey's English Dictionary*, (folio edition, 1736,) we find the term "*Ness* or *Neese*" given as a noun substantive, with the following explanation: "A promontory that runs into the sea like a nose:"—and he adds that it is "a term, with some alterations, peculiar to all the Northerns."

*ness* or *naze*, and the probability of its being a corruption of that word, is sufficiently clear.

Well, well, said the doctor, I don't think much of these names.

Perhaps not, answered Mr. Norset, if taken alone. I do not wish to found any theory upon them. The narrative is sufficiently clear, and its authenticity sufficiently obvious, without them. But they are curious, when taken in connection with these proven points. This branch of the subject deserves further investigation. It is only to be feared that almost all knowledge of the habits and language of the Indians in these parts is now irrecoverably lost, so that it will be impossible to pursue the investigation so far as might have been wished. Still, the tradition of the wooden house is saved, and that even you, doctor, will acknowledge to be curious and important.

Why, it is a tradition, to be sure, answered the doctor, carelessly; unable to dispute the fact, or disallow its force, and yet most unwilling to acknowledge his perception of the latter.

And what was done after the arrival of the ships at Hóp? asked Mr. Cassall.

The narrative goes on to state that, — "Having landed, they observed that where the land was low, corn grew wild; where it rose higher, vines were found." We have already seen that vines and corn do grow wild in these parts. "Every river was full of fish. They dug pits in the sand, where the tide rose the highest, and at low tide there remained *sacred fish* in these pits."

And, pray, what were "sacred fish?" asked the doctor.

They were the same with that kind of flat fish which we now call *halibut*, and which is still called, in Iceland, by the ancient name of "sacred fish." The cause of the name "sacred fish" (*sacri pisces*) may be learned from

Pliny, who tells us \* that it was always a sign of secure water where these fish were seen, because they were never found in the same waters with the dog-fish. It is well known that many of the flounder kind, (*pleuronectes*), among which is the halibut, (*hyppoglossus vulgaris*), frequent the shores of Massachusetts.

“In the forests there were a great number of wild beasts of all kinds —”

Wild beasts! exclaimed the doctor; I begin to grow alarmed.

Pray calm yourself, doctor; there is no intimation that these wild beasts were of a very dangerous description. In truth, the contrary is expressly to be gathered from the language subsequently used, where we are told of the men going into the woods for various purposes. That wild animals of many kinds formerly frequented these woods, is a fact which cannot be disputed. The Indians resorted to this spot, as a hunting-ground, for that very reason; and many of these animals, though now chiefly extirpated by the clearing and settling of the land, are still found on the mountains and less frequented parts.† In some of the old grave-yards in this neighborhood you may see, — for I have seen them myself, — large heavy masses of rock thrown completely over the most ancient graves, which tradition tells us was done for the express purpose of protecting the bodies from the wolves and other wild animals.‡

“They passed half a month here, (at Hóp,) carelessly, having brought with them their cattle. One morning, as

\* Hist. Nat. lib. ix. cap. 70. ad fin.; and Cf. Antiq. Am. p. 148. note a.

† See Antiq. Am. p. 364 and 369.

‡ These may be seen in the grave-yard on the Dorchester road, just beyond Roxbury, Massachusetts.



they were looking round, they saw a great number of canoes, in which poles were carried. These poles, vibrating in the direction of the sun, emitted a sound like reeds shaken by the wind." This mode of balancing their poles appears, from subsequent accounts, to have been the sign of peace. "Then said Thorfinn, 'What do you think this means?' Snorri Thorbrandson answered, 'Perhaps it is a sign of peace; let us take a white shield, (the sign of peace among the Northmen,) and hold out towards them.' They did so. Then those in the canoes rowed towards them, seeming to wonder who they were, and landed. They were swarthy in complexion, short and savage in appearance, with ugly hair, great eyes, and broad cheeks. When they had stayed some time, and gazed at the strangers in astonishment, they departed, and retired beyond the promontory to the southwest.

"Thorfinn and his companions erected dwellings at a little distance from the lake; some nearer, others further off." It is obvious that the dwellings erected by Leif, for his company of thirty-five, would not accommodate Thorfinn and his company of one hundred and fifty-one. "They passed the winter (their second, 1008—9) here. No snow fell, and all their cattle lived unhoused."

No snow! repeated the doctor, with an expression of surprise.

No snow, doctor! what of that? Did I not answer your *winterly objection* before? \* There was *no snow*, comparatively with what they had in Greenland and Iceland. This is all that we are to understand. 'There was so little, it appears, that the cattle could find provender. We have already seen that snow seldom falls, in many

---

\* See, ante, p. 104, &c.

parts of Rhode Island, of sufficient depth to permit of sleighing. Just think of the last two winters we have had, even in Boston, which is much colder than Rhode Island, and you will remember, — for you say you were there during part of each, — that there was no time when cattle might not have found provender sufficient in the open fields; while nothing to call snow fell.

But these years are exceptions,\* said the doctor.

And do you think exceptions never occurred formerly, as well as now? We have already seen that the previous winter, spent at Straumfiord, was so severe a one, that they were unable to procure any food, either from the water or the land; so that there were severe winters at that time, without a doubt. But that there were also mild ones then, as well as now, it is only natural to suppose. At any rate, almost any of the winters of this climate would be *mild to them*. The winter they passed at Straumfiord must have been one of unusual severity.

The doctor looked up, and gazed across the room, with the air of a man who does not choose to be satisfied or convinced, but does not think it safe to condescend to argue.

One thing, doctor, I must again recall to your mind, continued Mr. Norset; that these statements, as to the winters, being contrary to what a superficial reader might expect, who did not consider the comparative state of the countries spoken of, would never have appeared in a fabrication. They are stamped with authenticity from the very circumstance of their *apparent* inconsistency; this *apparent* inconsistency becoming, however,

---

\* The attention of the reader is requested to the note on this subject, ante, p. 104.

upon careful observation, a strong instance of necessary coincidence ; thus affording an admirable illustration of what Paley calls the "oblique coincidence."

The doctor's countenance immediately underwent a change ; for he could not but feel the justice of these remarks, though loath to acknowledge it.

Let us now proceed with the narrative : —

"One morning, in the following spring, (1009,) they saw a great number of canoes approaching from beyond the promontory at the southwest."

This promontory must have been that of Bristol Neck, I presume, said Mr. Cassall.

Undoubtedly, answered Mr. Norset.

"They were in such great numbers, that the whole water looked as if it were sprinkled with cinders. Poles were, as before, suspended in each canoe. Thorfinn and his party held out shields ; after which a barter of goods commenced between them. These people desired, above all things, to obtain some red cloth ; in exchange for which they offered various kinds of skins, some perfectly gray. They were anxious, also, to purchase swords and spears ; but this Thorfinn and Snorri forbade. For a narrow strip of red cloth they gave a whole skin, and tied the cloth round their heads. Thus they went on bartering for some time. When the supply of cloth began to run short, Thorfinn's people cut it into pieces so small that they did not exceed a finger's breadth ; and yet the Skrælings gave for them as much as, or even more than, before."

What skins were these ? asked the doctor.

There are a variety of animals found in these regions, whose skins answer to the description which we have. Among these are the squirrel, the weasel, the ermine, and others.

They were generous of their goods, I think.

No particular generosity; the bargain was equally advantageous on both sides. The Skrælings could get red cloth nowhere else, while the skins were of little value to them, being the fruits of their hunting expeditions, and capable, therefore, of being easily replaced. The red cloth, on the contrary, was of little value to the Northmen, while they valued the skins highly. It was a good bargain on each side, according to the most approved doctrines of the "*demand and supply*" system of political economy.

Let it pass, then. What happened after all the red cloth had been bought up?

We are told in the narrative of Thorfinn, contained in "the account of Eirik the Red, and of Greenland," that the women, of whom there were five according to that account, made milk porridge,\* and gave to the Skrælings, which so tickled their palates that they would purchase nothing else, but gave skins for this. It is very probable that this really took place. If so, it was most likely a device hit upon after all the red cloth had been disposed of, and when the Northmen were anxious to get more skins, but knew not what to offer for it. Nothing is said, however, about the milk porridge in the "account of Thorfinn," which proceeds:—

"It happened that a bull, which Thorfinn had brought with him, rushing from the woods, bellowed lustily just as this traffic was going on. The Skrælings were terribly alarmed at this, and, running down quickly to their canoes, rowed back towards the southwest; from which time they were not seen for three weeks. At the end of that time a vast number of the canoes of the Skrælings

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 59.

was seen coming from the southwest. All their poles were, on this occasion, turned opposite to the sun, and they all howled fearfully. Thorfinn's party raised the red shield." These were the signs of war on each side. "The Skrælings landed, and a battle followed. There was a galling discharge of weapons, for the Skrælings used slings. Thorfinn's party saw the Skrælings raise on a long pole a large globe, not unlike a sheep's belly, and almost of a blue color. They hurled this from the pole towards the party of Thorfinn, and, as it fell, it made a great noise."

What warlike engine, in the name of goodness, had the Indians or Skrælings got here? asked the doctor. The narrative begins to deal somewhat in the marvellous, methinks.

Not so, doctor, answered Mr. Norset. Some tribes of Esquimaux are, at this day, in the habit of employing a globe like that described,—being merely a distended bladder or otherwise,—in fishing; which they do in order to direct their fishing-poles with more certain aim. In the case before us, the bladder was probably attached, with the same object, to a parcel of stones. Such a charge would certainly prove destructive, were it to fall on any human being; while so singular an instrument of warfare was well calculated to terrify the Northmen. The effect of the bladder would be precisely the same as that of the feather of an arrow. This does not appear to have been a common instrument of warfare among the Skrælings, since no mention of it is made elsewhere; nor is more than one mentioned to have been employed in this engagement. It seems to have been the invention of the moment. This, however, cannot be positively stated to have been the case. It is not improbable that so simple though cumbrous an instrument might have

been in use occasionally. You know the mode of warfare among the natives was totally different formerly, to what it has been since they have possessed the rifle and the tomahawk.

“The sight of this,” continues the narrative, “excited great alarm among the followers of Thorfinn; so that they began immediately to fly along the course of the river, for they imagined themselves to be surrounded on all sides by the Skrælings. They did not halt till they reached some rocks,\* where they turned about and fought valiantly. Freydis going out (of the dwellings) and seeing the followers of Thorfinn flying, exclaimed, ‘Why do strong men, like you, run from such weak wretches, whom you ought to destroy like cattle? If I were armed, I believe that I should fight more bravely than any of you.’ They regarded not her words. Freydis endeavored to keep up with them, but was unable to do so, owing to the state of her health; yet she followed them as far as the neighboring wood. The Skrælings pursued her. She saw a man lying dead. This was

---

\* It is stated, in answer to queries addressed by the R. S. N. A. to the Rhode Island Historical Society, — and which answers were given *without the slightest knowledge* of the object of the queries, — that “there is a strip of land occupying this section of Massachusetts, and lying on *both sides* of Taunton River, consisting of the Greywacke formation; and, as is observed by Professor Hitchcock, ‘this rock in no place rises into any thing like mountain ridges, &c.’” (See *Antiq. Am.* p. 369.) This information affords a striking confirmation of the truth of the particulars narrated in the documents as above; and of the correctness of the localities assigned. The “rocks” mentioned in the narrative were, obviously, mere masses, of very trifling elevation, just sufficient to afford a skreen on one side from their enemies. This coincides precisely with the ridge of Greywacke mentioned, both in situation and elevation. The internal evidence thus afforded cannot fail to be perceived.

Thorbrand, the son of Snorri, in whose head a flat stone was sticking. His sword lay naked by his side. This she seized, and prepared to defend herself. The Skrælings came up with her. She struck her breast with the naked sword, which so astonished the Skrælings that they fled back to their canoes, and rowed off as fast as possible."

How came the sight of this woman so much to alarm them? asked the doctor.

It is easy to understand that. They were unaccustomed to see a female in the battle-field. Seeing Freydis in that particular attitude, and under those particular circumstances, they were very likely to be seized with some superstitious panic. Moreover, the Northmen were then, as we are informed, fighting valiantly at the rocks hard by: the Skrælings, discomfited by them, were thus prepared to be panic struck.

"The followers of Thorfinn coming up to her, extolled her courage. Two of their number fell, together with a vast number of the Skrælings." So you see, doctor, that the tradition and this account coincide, in stating that "the strangers fought the Indians with mighty success."

"Then the followers of Thorfinn, having been so hard pressed by the mere numbers of the enemy, returned home and dressed their wounds. Considering how great had been the multitude which had attacked them, they perceived that those who had come up from the canoes could have been only a single band; that the remainder, and greater part, must have come upon them from ambush.

"The Skrælings (in the course of the battle) found a dead man, and a battle-axe lying near him. One of them took up the axe and cut wood with it; then one after the other did the same, thinking it an instrument of

great value, and very sharp. Presently one of them took it and struck it against a stone, so that the axe broke. Finding that it would not cut stone, they thought it useless, and threw it away.

“Thorfinn and his companions now thought it obvious that, although the quality of the land was excellent, yet there would always be danger to be apprehended from the natives. They therefore prepared to depart, and to return to their native country. They first sailed round the land to the northward. They took, near the shore, five Skrælings clothed in skins, and sleeping; these had with them boxes containing marrow mixed with blood. Thorfinn presumed them to have been exiled from the country. His people killed them. They afterwards came to a promontory abounding in wild animals, as they judged from the marks found in the sand.”

And where is this promontory? asked the doctor.

I should imagine, answered Mr. Norset, that there can be little doubt this paragraph refers to an expedition made, before finally quitting Hóp, round *Bristol Neck*, and up Narraganset Bay to the northward, towards the promontory on which the present city of Providence stands. This very promontory may have been the one mentioned, though it was perhaps most probably either that of *Chipinoxet Point* or that of *Sowams*. The words of the narrative are clear as to the *direction* of the course taken, and the mention of a promontory is also distinct. From the tenor of this part of the narrative, this expedition was obviously only a short one; and, from what follows, it seems clear, also, that it must have been made before they left Hóp for Straumfiord. It was natural that they should explore the coast in their more immediate neighborhood before finally quitting it.

Yes, said Mr. Cassall, keeping his eye on the map; it



seems evident that the course you indicate was the one thus taken. Since there was an abundance of wild animals in this neighborhood, it was to be expected that their tracks should be found here.

The narrative, resumed Mr. Norset, thus continues: —

“They then went again to Straumfiord, (1009,) where there were abundant supplies of all that they needed.” Then follows a clause which is clearly the record of some less perfect tradition than that embodied in the rest of the document. The whole style and manner are different, and the very mode in which it is inserted shows that, in the opinion of him who committed it to writing, it was not deserving of credit. It is, moreover, inconsistent with all the preceding parts of the narrative in this account, and with each of the other detailed narratives contained in the volume, as well as with all other evidence. It is, therefore, by this internal evidence, to be rejected as an erroneous and imperfect tradition, which, however, the compiler of this document inserted, in his anxiety to preserve all pertaining to this subject, and in his candor, and perfect consciousness of the truth of that which he was relating.

Come, come, said the doctor; I do not like this at all. I suppose there is something here which will invalidate all the rest. Pray, let us hear it.

I expected this, doctor. But, however, this passage does not invalidate any one of the main facts of the narrative in the slightest degree. The only thing that it can affect is the length of time during which Thorfinn remained at Hóp. By the same rules of evidence, however, which have been all along adopted, this passage must be rejected as spurious. But you shall judge for yourself. It is in the following words:

“Some say,” — very different, you see, from the

straight-forward simple tone of all that precedes, and, as you will see, of all that follows, — “Some say that Biarni and Gudrid remained here (at Straumfiord) with one hundred men, and that they never went any further; that Thorfinn and Snorri went towards the southwest with forty men, and that they remained no longer at Hóp than barely two months, returning the same summer.” You see now, very plainly, that the only question is a question of *time*. You see, too, that the passage is disconnected from that which it adjoins, and that it is inserted in a manner which shows that the writer himself doubts of its correctness.

“I must say, remarked the doctor, that I do not see how any exception can be taken to your explanation. Nothing appears to be got by this passage in any way.

That is very clear, said Mr. Norset. It is merely a question of criticism. At the same time it is perfectly obvious that the passage would never have been inserted in a fabrication. It becomes, therefore, another internal proof of the authenticity and truth of these narratives. Let us proceed: —

“Afterwards, (that is after they had arrived at Straumfiord,) Thorfinn went, with one ship, to seek Thorhall the Hunter, the rest remaining at Straumfiord.” We see, from this passage, how the confusion in the imperfect tradition just quoted must have arisen. Observe this, doctor, I beg, for it is a striking instance of “oblique coincidence,” affording exceedingly strong internal evidence of the authenticity of the whole. Thorfinn left all the others at Straumfiord, while he went, with one ship’s company, to search for Thorhall. Biarni and Gudrid were, in this case, left behind. This departure was then confused with his first departure from Straumfiord, when he went thence to Hóp, — the objects of the dif-

ferent expeditions being confounded. Thus Thorfinn *did* leave Straumfiord with forty men, (*the number of his ship's crew, as we learn from a previous passage,\**) leaving Biarni and Gudrid and all the rest behind, — but it was *not* when he went to Hóp; it was on a different occasion, and for a different purpose. This case, I repeat, affords another exceedingly interesting illustration of the *oblique coincidence*; one in which an *apparent inconsistency* again assists us in the discovery of truth; in which the *errors* in one tradition aid us in ascertaining the correctness of certain facts stated in another and distinct tradition.

Indeed, observed Mr. Cassall, I agree with you. I hardly ever remember to have seen or heard a more striking instance illustrative of this mode of proof. It is certainly utterly impossible that there could have been any *designed* coincidence here. Let us now hear what course Thorfinn took in the search for Thorhall.

“Sailing northward round Kialarness, they went westward, after passing that promontory, — the land lying to their left hand, (larboard.) There they saw extended forests. When they had sailed for some time they came to a place where a river flowed from southeast to northwest. Having entered its mouth, they cast anchor on the southwestern bank.” Here we have the other version of the death of Thorvald, to which I have already alluded.

“One morning the followers of Thorfinn saw, in an open place in the wood, something at a distance which glittered. When they shouted, it moved. This was a uniped —”

A uniped! exclaimed the doctor. We have got to the

---

\* Ante, p. 156.

land of wonders at last, however. Who ever heard of an animal with one leg before?

Every body who has heard the wonderful story of Mynheer Vonwodenblock's cork leg, which "walked of Europe all the tour." But, seriously, doctor, here is no mystery. From what follows, we learn that this was a man who was seen; and the appearance of being one-legged was doubtless occasioned by his dress. If you have seen Mr. Catlin's valuable and interesting *Indian Gallery*, you must remember that there are many costumes, even now in use among Indian tribes, which, from their singular form, would give to the wearer, seen from a distance, the appearance of being a uniped. We know that the Northmen were superstitious, and inclined to the marvellous; and the dress being different from their own, and giving so singular an appearance to the wearer, they never stopped to consider the cause of the appearance, but set the object down at once as a uniped.

"This was a uniped, who immediately betook himself to the bank of the river, where the ship lay. Thorvald Eirekson was sitting near the helm. The uniped shot an arrow at him. Thorvald, having extracted the arrow, said, — 'We have found a rich land, but shall enjoy it little.' After a short time, Thorvald died of the wound. The uniped subsequently retired. Thorfinn's crew pursued him. They presently saw him run into a neighboring creek. They then returned, and one of them sang these verses: \*

Pursue we did, —  
'Tis true, no more, —  
The uniped  
Down to the shore.

---

\* These verses are exceedingly peculiar, both in style and metre, in the original. This peculiarity the author has in both respects endeavored to imitate in the following translation.

The wondrous man  
 His course quite clear  
 Through ocean ran!  
 Hear! Thorfinn, hear!

“Then, having returned, (that is, the whole ship’s company having returned to Kialarness,) they sailed towards the south; for, imagining that this was the land of the unipeds, they were unwilling to expose themselves to danger any longer. They concluded that the hills which were in Hóp were the same as those which they here saw.”

This remark, observed Mr. Cassall, seems to render “assurance doubly sure.” These hills must, I presume, have been the “Blue Hills,” whose principal elevation is at Milton. Hóp, I suppose, extended to some distance inland, as appears indeed evident from the narrative; and the spot just alluded to as the death place of Thorvald you showed before\* to be most probably Point Alderton, the correctness of which locality is confirmed by the remarks in this part of the narrative.

Yes, answered Mr. Norset, there can be little doubt, from the language in the narrative, that Hóp extended up the country to a considerable distance, probably several miles. They remained here, you will remember, a full year or more, they hunted and fished in “the rivers;” built some dwellings near the lake, others further off; &c. —all showing that they must have become well acquainted with the interior. And the whole tract was called Hóp. The Blue Hills would then, certainly, be within the range of Hóp; and from Point Alderton, and in approaching Boston Harbor, these hills may be distinctly seen.†

---

\* Ante, p. 123.

† It may not be amiss to notice that the following expression,

“They passed the winter (1009—10) in Straumfiord. Snorri Thorfinnson had been born during the first autumn, (that is, as I mentioned before, in its place, soon after their first arrival at Straumfiord, in 1007,) and was in his third year when they left Vinland;” — the whole of this tract was called Vinland, you will remember.

“Setting sail from Vinland, (in the spring of 1010,) with southerly winds, they touched at Markland, and found there five Skrælings, of whom one was a grown man, two were women, and two boys. Thorfinn’s party seized the boys, the others escaping and hiding themselves in caves. They took these two boys with them, taught them their language, and baptized them. The boys called their mother Vethildi, and their father Uvæge. They said that chiefs ruled over the Skrælings, of whom one was named Avalldania, the other Valldidida; that they had no houses, but lived in caverns, and the hollows of rocks; that beyond their country was another, the inhabitants of which were clothed in white, and carried before them long poles with flags, and shouted with a loud voice. It was thought that this must be Huitramannaland, (white man’s land,) or Irland it Mikla, (Great Ireland.)”

Huitramannaland! said the doctor; what a name! Pray, where was this?

You shall hear all about it by and by, said Mr. Norset.

---

made use of in the *second* account of Thorfinn, clearly shows that these hills had no great elevation. “They determined to explore all the hills which were in Hóp.” *Antiq. Am.* p. 181. They could not very easily have explored, and would not have been very likely to determine to explore, all or any part of a range of Alpine hills. The expression shows, also, that they *did explore the interior of the country.*

Let us now finish this narrative, which we have almost brought to a conclusion.

“They afterwards (1010) reached Eireksfiord, in Greenland, and passed the winter there.\* But Biarni Grimolfson and his crew were driven out into the Greenland ocean.” In one account it is stated the *Irish* ocean; the same region of the open ocean is doubtless signified.

“The sea was full of marine worms, which they did not perceive till their ship began to sink.”

Quite time to perceive it then, in truth, said the doctor.

“They had with them a boat, covered with seal oil. This the marine worm does not touch. They found that the boat would not hold them all. Then said Biarni, ‘Since the boat cannot carry more than half our number, I think we had better cast lots who shall go aboard her; for rank is not to be considered in such a matter.’ All agreed. The lots were cast. It so fell that Biarni and half his company should go aboard the boat.

“When they had gone aboard, a man, an Icelander, who was in the ship, and who had accompanied Biarni from Iceland, cried,—‘Will you leave me here, Biarni?’ Biarni answered,—‘It cannot be helped.’ Said he,—‘You promised my parents very differently, when I left Iceland, than that you would thus desert me. You promised that the same fortune should be shared by both.’ Biarni re-

---

\* This passage is *omitted* in the *first* “account of Thorfinn,” but occurs in the second. It also occurs in the details of Thorfinn’s expedition in the “account of Eirek the Red.” It is so obviously an accidental omission in the first of these accounts, that it is needless making any argument on the subject in the text. The next mention of Thorfinn, in that very account, implies this passage. It commences,—‘*The next summer Thorfinn returned to Iceland.*’ He could have returned to Iceland the next summer in no way but by having spent the intervening months in Greenland.

plied,—‘That cannot be ; but do you come down into the boat, and I will go up again into the ship ; for I see that you are fond of life.’ So Biarni went into the ship again, and this man came down into the boat. Then those in the boat went on till they came to land, where they told all. It was generally believed that Biarni and his companions perished in the ocean, for nothing more was ever heard of them.”

We now come to the conclusion of Thorfinn’s history. This, in the “account of Thorfinn,” is exceedingly brief, and for an obvious reason,—namely, that his whole life in Iceland, and the condition of his family, were so well known, that it was needless to detail any particulars concerning them in the accounts of his expedition published in Iceland : these, as we have seen, were first detailed by himself, and afterwards, only a very few years after his death, committed to writing. In Greenland, on the contrary, where he was less known, and where the “account of Eirek” was written, the particulars concerning him would not be complete without a few facts, such as could be obtained, as to the subsequent history of his family. Accordingly, we find these particulars in the “account of Eirek.” These diversities in the two documents afford another strong internal proof of the authenticity of each, as a distinct document, and of the accuracy and truth of the contents. It is morally impossible they could ever have been found in fabrications. The “account of Thorfinn” merely adds that, “in the ensuing summer, (1011,) Thorfinn returned to Iceland, to Reynisness, (a promontory on the northern coast ; ) but his mother, not being pleased at his marriage, would not permit Gudrid to enter her house the first year. She subsequently, however, became reconciled to her.” A pedigree of some of Thorfinn’s descendants is added to this document as it at present



stands, — added, however, as a glance must serve to show, not by the *narrator*, but by the person who committed the narrative to writing. For further particulars, though brief, as to Thorfinn's history, we must turn to the "account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland," which proceeds as follows: —

"Thorfinn" \* having, as we have already seen, arrived safely at Eireksfiord, and stayed there one winter, "fitted out his ship and put out to sea; it being commonly thought that so rich a cargo had never left Greenland. After a prosperous voyage, he reached Norway in safety where, staying the winter, he disposed of his merchandise. He and his wife were received with the greatest courtesy by the first men in Norway. In the following spring he made preparations for returning to Iceland. When all was ready, and the vessel only waiting for a fair wind, a certain southerner came to him from Bremen in Saxony. He wanted to buy a weathercock † which Thorfinn had. 'I do not wish to sell it,' was the reply. 'I will give you half a mark of gold for it,' said the southerner. The price appeared to Thorfinn so great that he agreed to sell it. The southerner took the weathercock, but Thorfinn knew not of what sort of wood it was made. It was the Mæsur, (*macér*, that is, *maple*,) which he had brought from Vinland. Then Thorfinn set sail and arrived at Skagafiord, in the north quarter of Iceland," not far from Reynisness. "There he remained during the winter. In the following spring, he bought the *Glaumbæ* ‡ estate, on which he

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 72, &c.

† Cf. Antiq. Am. pp. 74 and 441, note c.

‡ All these places will be found marked in the map to Hender-son's Iceland. They still retain their ancient names.

built a house, and where he lived during the remainder of his life, much honored.

“From him and his wife sprang a numerous and illustrious race. Thorfinn being dead, Gudrid and Snorri remained on the estate,—the latter being the son born in Vinland. When Snorri married, Gudrid took a journey to Rome, and afterwards returned to her son’s house, who had, meantime, built a church at Glaumbæ. Gudrid subsequently entered a convent, and passed the remainder of her life in solitude.” The account concludes with stating that “Thorfinn himself has given a more accurate account than any other man, concerning the events of these expeditions;”—which passage, occurring, remember, in the “account of Eirek the Red,” is certainly as much as to say,—“I have given you the best account I could. If you want to know the whole story thoroughly, you must hear the record which Thorfinn himself has left of it; which, though I have not heard it, will, of course, be more complete and perfect than mine, or any body’s else;” and which record, doctor, is the one which has been our chief guide through all the details.

Thus we have brought the history of Thorfinn’s adventures to a conclusion, and

“So ends this brief, evenful history.”

Is it ended? asked the doctor.

It is finished, answered Mr. Norset, in a peculiarly dry manner.

There was a silence of a few minutes.

Why, doctor, said Mr. Norset, at length, you really look as if you were sorry that the narrative has closed.

O, said the doctor, one always feels some regret when a tale is finished in which any interest has been taken.

Then you acknowledge your interest in the matter? But do you not know, doctor, that it is always when the most complete appearance of *truth* exists in a narrative, that the most deep interest is taken? He is the most clever writer of fiction, who throws around his fiction the greatest aspect of reality.

Fiction! said the doctor, catching at the word; fiction! humph! yes.

No fiction here, my dear doctor. Too many points have been established in which the simple garb of honest truth has been recognized, through coincidences which it is impossible could have been the result of accident or design, for you now to talk of any of these narratives as fiction. I must distinctly say that if you do pretend to doubt the truth of these narratives, after the illustrations of their truth with which I have presented you, I cannot argue further. No human testimony can satisfy you. There is no book, document, or record, ancient or modern, the authenticity and truth of which is established upon sounder and completer testimony,—few on so complete,—as is the authenticity and truth of these documents and narratives. The kind of testimony to which I allude is the internal testimony, consisting in *undesigned coincidences* existing between *different parts of the same narrative*, and the like coincidences existing *between parts of distinct narratives, originating in different individuals, without one having knowledge of, or reference to, the existence of the other*. This evidence is complete in the present case, and it amounts, in truth, as I have before said, to *demonstration*.

Well, said the doctor, I do not pretend to say that you have not evidence of some kind.

Of some kind! excuse me, doctor; I do not wish to argue this point for the sake of arguing, but for the sake

of establishing *the truth* with respect to an interesting, and, in many respects, an important historical fact. But I have already said, and many a wiser man has said before me, that there is no fact the best established, and no evidence the most impregnable, against which it is not possible to cavil and dispute.

Stop, stop, said the doctor; I do not wish to cavil. I must acknowledge that your case has been made out pretty well.

Nay, doctor; you said, yesterday morning, when we were discussing the *mode* of proof, that, if I could establish the existence of the *internal coincidental proof* in these narratives, you should be satisfied. I have established it.

Let me ask you one question, said the doctor, wishing to evade a direct reply to these remarks:—Have you brought up all the inconsistencies, or apparent inconsistencies, which exist in the narratives, and fairly compared the whole?

I have done so, throughout, with the greatest care. I can safely and distinctly assert that there is not, to my knowledge and belief, after a most thorough examination of all the original records, a single apparent inconsistency which I have not displayed. If there be any, it must have been so minute that it escaped my searching attention. Yes, doctor, you have had all the apparent inconsistencies; and it has been clearly seen that the only points established by them are, the *real consistency* of every part of each narrative with every other, and,—which, to the demonstration of the truth of the narratives, is scarcely less important,—that the different documents, though coinciding in the statement of all the main facts, were written by different individuals, without any knowl-

edge of, or concert with, each other, or each other's writings.\*

I must say, remarked Mr. Cassall, that I think it is now very clear that the Northmen not only discovered this continent, but that they also explored it well, and that they passed some years of residence here, in New England. Let us see : Thorfinn's party remained here three winters, did they not ?

They did. They left Greenland in the spring of 1007, stayed at Straumfiord (Buzzard's Bay) during the following winter, (1007—8,) in the autumn preceding which Snorri Thorfinnson was born ; stayed the following winter (1008—9) at Hóp ; and the next (1009—10) again at Straumfiord ; and returned to Greenland in the spring of 1010, after an absence of three years. You will remember that Thorvald's party resided here for the space of three years also, from the summer of 1002, to the spring of 1005 ; and that Leif's party resided here one year, — from 1000 to 1001 ; in addition to which, Freydis and her husband remained here one year, from 1011 to 1012. Thus we have *recorded histories* of the residence of THE NORTHMEN IN NEW ENGLAND during a space of EIGHT YEARS. We shall afterwards find that it is highly probable their stay was more continued.

You mentioned yesterday, observed the doctor, that,

---

\* It will be perceived that the mention made, in the "account of Eirek," of the tradition left by Thorfinn, corroborates this statement. The author of that "account" informs us that he *had heard* that Thorfinn had left such a tradition. He *presumes* that this must, of necessity, be more complete than his own, which was gathered from individuals less interested in, and less qualified to relate, the events of the expedition ; but he had no *knowledge* of the contents of the tradition recorded by Thorfinn, — otherwise he would have given them.

besides these two principal accounts, — that of “Eirek the Red, and of Greenland,” and that “of Thorfinn Karlsefni,” — there were several extracts relating to the same discoveries printed in that book; those extracts being made from many other ancient manuscripts. What are they?

It will not be worth while to detail each one. They are of two kinds: — First, extracts from different ancient works, in which mention is made of different individuals who figure in these narratives, and allusion incidentally made to their histories, which incidental allusions corroborate the truth of these narratives, thus affording other incidental proof of their authenticity and truth. Second, of extracts from several ancient geographical and other works, in which mention is made of Vinland and other places visited on the continent of America, and the authors of which works lived at different times, many of them in different countries, and under totally different circumstances, from the authors of these narratives. To this class belongs the extract from Adam of Bremen, which I quoted yesterday. You will immediately perceive how strong is the testimony afforded by both these classes of extracts. In some instances there is some diversity in unimportant points, which serves to enhance the value of the testimony, being a further proof of the absence of all concert or design. Thus, in one extract,\* the history of Biarni Grimolfson is correctly given, as in all the other narratives, but he is called *Thorbiarni*, and the surname *Karlsefni* is added to his name, — the same surname which Thorfinn bore, but which his companion, Biarni, had earned as rightfully, — signifying, as it did, *able to achieve*.

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 196.

We will not, then, call, upon you for these extracts in detail; but there is one extract which we cannot allow you to omit.

What is that?

You know you stated, yesterday, that, among the extracts, were some which showed that the knowledge of this country was so general among the Northmen, formerly, that, even in fictions, it is found mentioned.

The instance to which I alluded is one among several which might be quoted. It is an ancient ballad, and is printed at full length in this volume.

Is it a long or a short piece?

It is rather long, but we have yet an hour and a half before tea, and shall have more than abundance of time to read it, and discuss all that remains relating to Vinland. If you are so minded, therefore, we will proceed with this ballad now.

At this moment the doctor was called away by a visitor. He rose to answer the call, saying, —

I will be back in a few minutes; and we will then, if you please, “give ear unto your song.”

## CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT BALLAD in which VINLAND is mentioned. — Latest recorded Visits to the Continent of America by the Northmen. — Continued intercourse with those regions. — Permanent Colonies established by the Northmen in the Western Hemisphere.

I HAVE kept my word, said the doctor, entering the room again, after an absence of a quarter of an hour, and have soon returned. Let us now proceed with this fiction which you mentioned.

Willingly. It is, as I have stated, in the form of a ballad, and —

Stay, interrupted the doctor. Before you tell us about its character, and origin, and history, I must beg you to let us understand one point, on which at present I feel rather in the dark. What can this or any other fiction do, in any way, towards proof of the authenticity of these accounts of the Northmen's discoveries?

You will perceive that this ballad affords strong and indeed absolute testimony to three things: 1. that Vinland was a region well known to exist by the author of the ballad, and generally at the time in which he lived. He alludes to it in a manner which shows that he alluded to that which was well and commonly known. 2. It shows that this Vinland was commonly known to be at a great distance from Ireland, over the sea, so that to reach it was no slight achievement. And, 3. It shows that voyages *were sometimes* made from Ireland to Vinland, which I shall have occasion, to-morrow, to show you was likewise the case as to other parts of America.



You do not pretend to say that there is any truth in the ballad?

It is not improbable that it may have a foundation in historical fact, the details being an embellishment. The ballad is an extremely ancient one. It was made in the Faroe Isles, between Britain and Iceland, which isles are celebrated for the traditions of this kind which their bards preserved in verse. Several volumes of these ancient historical ballads are in existence. Some have been published, others are still in manuscript. The present one, with the exception of its publication in this volume,\* lies still in manuscript in the Royal Library at Copenhagen.

Is it all about Vinland?

No; it relates a tradition concerning the son of a certain prince of Upland, (in Sweden,) who went to Ireland to seek the king's daughter in marriage, and met with refusals from the father. Many fatal deeds follow, and at length the princess agrees to marry him if he will kill the kings of Vinland. In relation to this point it is to be observed that, in the Faroe Isles, it was commonly believed that Vinland was discovered from Ireland, and that the Irish sailed thither and had many battles with the natives, who, as we have seen from the "account of Thorfinn Karlsefni," and as we know to have been the case and to be now the case, were under chiefs, to whom, as they held the same rank, the Northmen gave the same title as to their own kings. These facts will take away from what might, at first sight, seem the absurdity in what relates to Vinland in the following account. The whole story is highly embellished, as was to be expected, by the author's fancy.

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 319.

I prèsume, as the ballad is so ancient, that its language and style are peculiarly quaint ?

They are so ; and I will endeavor, in translating it, to preserve, as far as possible, the style and quaintness of the original.\* Shall I now commence ?

As soon as you like.

## Ancient Ballad

of

### FINN the FAIR.

- 1 A prince there dwelt in UPLAND once ;  
(I love due order to maintain :)  
This prince he had two goodly sons,  
Whom easily I here may name :
- 2 This prince he had two sons most rare,  
Whom easily I here may name,—  
HOLDAN the STRONG, and FINN the FAIR,  
Both widely known to martial fame.
- 3 Of these, the birthright Holdan owned :  
Finn was in years the younger still ;  
On him were nature's gifts bestowed,  
But fate and fortune used him ill.

---

\* The author has endeavored to preserve also the style of rhythm and verse employed in the original, which is of the same nature as that employed in the old English ballads, as will be immediately recognized by those familiar with the noble ballads of " *Chevy Chase,*" &c. It must be stated that the original ballad consists of one hundred and four verses, but, fearing that the insertion of the whole might be esteemed tedious, the author has reduced the number to ninety-one. No material passage has been omitted, but merely some of the unimportant adornments.

- 4 This Finn once met his comrades free,  
And thus to them his thoughts expressed:—  
“Where dwells the damsel worthy me?  
Long on my mind this thought has pressed.”
- 5 To him his comrades thus reply:—  
“Oh why of us dost thou inquire?  
Thou knowest best where turns thine eye,  
Where fixes most thy strong desire.
- 6 “But now, to prove our love and faith,  
We’ll name a maid of noblest race:  
The IRISH KING a daughter hath,  
Renowned for every female grace.
- 7 “A daughter hath the Irish king,  
For grace and wisdom far renowned;  
If her in marriage thou should’st join,  
’T would to thy honor much redound.”
- 8 “If then this maid,” thus answered Finn,  
“So worthy is of my estate,  
I’ll seek her of the Irish king;  
Whatever fortune me await.”
- 9 Then Finn the Fair, he straight began  
To fit his vessels out with care;  
The cables all, through every span,  
With purest gold entwined are.
- 10 Then Finn the Fair, he straight began  
To fit his vessels out with care,  
And many a goodly hogshead ran  
With well-brewed ale and wine most rare
- 11 And Finn his ships he did supply  
With choicest gifts, a generous store;  
Each plank which meets the gazer’s eye,  
With golden plates is covered o’er.

- 12 Each beak is painted deepest black,  
Each vessel's sides are brightest blue,  
Nor burnished gold the mast-heads lack,  
Resplendent, glittering in the view.
- 13 His silken sails he raises then,  
On yards of gold extended wide,  
His sails he never furls again  
Till Ireland from the helm he spied.
- 14 A shepherd on the plain reclined,  
The royal herds he there was tending ;  
He sees, full borne before the wind,  
A stately vessel thither wending.
- 15 His flocks he drives within the fold,  
Nor leaves them there, unguarded all.  
Then dons his mantle, and, untold,  
He enters quick the monarch's hall.
- 16 He dons his mantle, and, untold,  
He enters quick the monarch's hall.  
" In one thing sure," he utters bold,  
" I now am wiser than you all.
- 17 " In one thing sure," he utters bold,  
" I, wiser than you all, do boast :  
I see a stately vessel hold  
Her gallant course for Ireland's coast."
- 18 " See you a stately vessel hold  
Her gallant course to Ireland's shore ?  
Some noble prince now, doubtless, would  
My beauteous daughter's hand implore."
- 19 Now, where the vessel first drew nigh  
The pleasant shores of Ireland's strand,  
Her anchor cast, she fast doth lie  
Above the beds of whitest sand.

- 20 Then Finn the Fair, upon the land,  
Leaps from her sides, the first of all;  
Then follows straight a goodly band  
Of harnessed warriors, at his call.
- 21 Then Finn, within the garden nigh,  
His gorgeous mantle o'er him threw;  
And, so attired, with bearing high,  
Straight to the palace hall he drew:
- 22 And so attired, with bearing high,  
Straight to the palace hall he drew:  
Five hundred men were seated nigh  
The Irish king before his view.
- 23 Across the pavement of the hall  
Finn goes in ancient manner brief:  
In one short word he opens all  
His business, — and demands a wife.
- 24 Finn stands upon the pavement then,  
And brief expresses his demand; —  
“All hail! thou doughty Irish king!  
I seek to win thy daughter's hand.”
- 25 Then answered straight the Irish king,  
Sword-girt, and sitting on his throne,—  
“What name and honor dost thou bring,  
What land thee for her chief does own?”
- 26 “My name is FINN the FAIR,” he said,  
“And brother mine is HOLDAN STRONG;  
My father, ULVUR, prince of dread,  
Who loved my mother, GARTRU, long.”
- 27 Then said the king, — “Unequal seems  
This match to kindred of the maid;  
Her father, king of mighty realms;  
Thine, but a prince of small estate.”

- 28 Upon the pavement of the hall  
Finn stands, regardful of his right ;  
At length thus sounds his haughty call,—  
“ O king, I am your equal quite :
- 29 “ But, if thou dost refuse the maid,  
Before that I shall now depart,  
Full low thy head shall here be laid,  
And many a youth’s who takes thy part.
- 30 “ But, if your daughter you deny  
In marriage now to me to give,  
Your skill in arms you e’en must try,  
If you another hour would live.”
- 31 Across the pavement of the hall  
Finn bounds with agile step and strong ;  
Full eighteen knights before him fall,  
As toward the door he hastes along.
- 32 Across the pavement of the hall  
Finn bounds, before their swords him reach ;  
But eighteen of his followers fall,  
Which makes an equal loss to each.
- 33 Full eighteen doughty warriors there,  
Oppressed with wounds, before him fell,  
Ere they could seize on Finn the Fair,  
And cast him in the donjon cell.
- 34 At length they seize on Finn the Fair,  
And into donjon him they cast ;  
Nor gyves nor heavy chains they spare,  
But lock his limbs together fast.
- 35 And then they seized on Finn the Fair,  
And in the donjon cold him laid ;  
Then fastens grief and wild despair  
On INGEBORG, the royal maid.

- 36 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid,  
In loose attire her father found :  
With naked feet, — a linen braid  
Around her silken tresses bound ; —
- 37 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid,  
Upon her knees before him there, —  
“ O grant, my father,” thus she said,  
“ This knight a husband to my prayer.”
- 38 Then said the king, — “ Unequal seems  
This match to all thy kindred, maid :  
Thy father, king of mighty realms ;  
His, but a prince of small estate.”
- 39 Then Ingeborg, worse than before  
Her grief and anger kindled, spake ;  
She vows that she will never more  
Her father’s counsel ask or take.
- 40 Her messenger she calls in haste,  
And on him puts a robe so gay :  
“ A trusty page thou ever wast,”  
She said, and bade him speed his way.
- 41 Swift-footed was this page, I ween,  
As messenger should always be ;  
And on his garb the rose was seen  
With lilies twined, which worked had she.
- 42 “ Now hear, my trusty page,” she said ;  
“ Forget not what thy errand is ;  
In sleep lay not thy weary head,  
Till thou hast told to Holdan this.”
- 43 Then quickly went that page, I ween,  
Nor stayed till he had reached the land  
Where many a noted mark was seen  
Which told the strength of Holdan’s hand.

- 44 This little page he entered straight  
The presence hall of Holdan Strong,  
Who sat there, on a lofty seat,  
With troubled look, the crowd among.
- 45 "Now welcome page," cried Holdan then,  
"Now welcome to this palace mine:  
Come, drink, and tell thy errand when  
Thy thirst is quenched with mead or wine."
- 46 "Oh little does thy mead allure,"  
He answered; "less thy costly wine;  
Far other errand have I, sure,  
Which brings me now to thee and thine.
- 47 "Know, mighty Holdan, that I come,  
A message sad to bring to thee;  
Upon thy brother, far from home,  
Misfortunes dire attendant be."
- 48 Then Holdan straight with anger burned;—  
The tables from before him flung;—  
The numerous goblets, overturned,  
Poured forth, in streams, the beverage strong.
- 49 Forth from his seat then Holdan leaped;  
His rage and anger kindled high;  
And, from the table, by him swept,  
Fifteen gold cups in fragments lie.
- 50 Then Holdan leads a mighty band;  
Both slaves and free enlisted are;  
Where one was called two eager stand,  
Sworn to revenge bold Finn the Fair.
- 51 His silken sails he raises then,  
On yards of gold extended wide;  
His sails he never furls again,  
Till Ireland from the helm he spied.



- 52 Above the beds of whitest sand,  
Her anchor cast, the vessel lay ;  
Holdan the strong, the first did stand  
Upon the Irish coast that day.
- 53 The distant coast he first annoyed,  
And thence advancing, secretly,  
By fire and sword he fierce destroyed  
Each town and village he came nigh.
- 54 Then Holdan, — every act, in turn,  
And injury suffered, first reviewed, —  
Resolves the citadel to burn,  
And all escape he does preclude.
- 55 O then the Irish king, he cried, —  
He cried with voice both loud and strong,  
“ Oh why this night am I betrayed ?  
On whom have I inflicted wrong ? ”
- 56 Then answered Holdan Strong to him,  
He answered straight in words but few, —  
“ O king of Ireland, well, I ween,  
My brother once was known to you.”
- 57 Then answer gave the Irish king, —  
By sad estate compelled to own, —  
“ Not death did I e'er on him bring,  
But into donjon he was thrown.”
- 58 Then Holdan straight the donjon sees,  
None daring any let \* to be ;  
The doors, of iron tough, he breaks,  
And from his chains then sets him free.
- 59 The doors, of iron tough, he breaks,  
And from his chains then sets him free ;  
“ Arise, my brother,” thus he speaks,  
“ If thou art willing hence to flee.”

---

\* *Let*, — hindrance, obstruction : so used by all old writers.

- 60 Up leaped, that instant, Finn the Fair,  
While rage sat darkening o'er his brow :  
"The king I must a tribute bear,  
For this cold iron lent me now."
- 61 Then sat him down brave Holdan there,  
And to his brother thus resumed : —  
"Attend, my brother, lend thine ear, —  
The king with fire has been consumed."
- 62 Then out they went the donjon walls  
Unhurt, and none does hindrance bear ;  
Thence to the stately palace halls,  
To Ingeborg, they both repair.
- 63 "Hail, Ingeborg ! thou royal maid !  
Both fair and beautiful art thou :  
Wilt thou this prince elect," they said,  
"And take him for thy husband now ?"
- 64 Then Ingeborg doth answer make, —  
"This matter is most hard to do ;  
But, if the VINLAND KINGS you 'll take,  
An answer, sure, I 'll give to you."
- 65 Then powerful Holdan thus replied, —  
" 'T will grief and sorrow bring to all ;  
For who shall reach the Vinland tide,  
Him perils dire shall sure befall."
- 66 Then Finn the Fair, with rapid stride,  
The palace quits, and seeks the shore :  
"To Vinland straight my course I 'll guide,  
Though Ingeborg I ne'er see more."
- 67 His silken sails he raises then,  
On yards of gold extended wide ;  
His sails he never turls again,  
Till Vinland from the helm he spied.

- 68 Then Finn, within the garden nigh,  
His costly robe he o'er him threw;  
And, so attired, with bearing high,  
Straight to the palace halls he drew.
- 69 And, so attired, with bearing high,  
Straight to the palace halls he drew:  
Five hundred men were standing nigh  
The Vinland kings before his view.
- 70 Then entered Finn the palace hall,  
And stood before them, face to face:  
The kings sat on their thrones, and all,  
Unmoved and silent, kept their place.
- 71 It was the morning of the day,  
Scarce yet aurora's light appeared,  
When there the Vinland kings, they say,  
Twelve hundred armed men prepared.
- 72 And there the Vinland kings, they say,  
Twelve hundred armed men prepared;  
'Gainst these, brave Finn the Fair, that day,  
To try his strength, unaided, dared.
- 73 And in the midst Finn now is seen,  
Active in fight before them all;  
Loud clang their arms that time, I ween;  
Now two, now three, before him fall.
- 74 And in the midst Finn still is seen,  
In strength he far surpasses all:  
Loud clang their arms again, I ween;  
Now five, now six, before him fall.
- 75 For two whole days the fight did last;  
From clashing swords the lightnings played;  
Nor on the earth his footstep passed,—  
His slaughtered foes his path he made.

- 76 And in the midst Finn still is seen,  
 Nor dares, for honor's sake, to flee;  
 And now, 't is said, that there remain  
 Of all that host but only three.
- 77 And in the midst Finn still is seen; —  
 Full well his deeds are known to fame; —  
 And Vinland king the first, I ween,  
 By his good sword is hewn in twain.
- 78 And in the midst Finn still is borne,  
 Nor dares, for honor's sake, to flee;  
 The second Vinland king that morn  
 His sword hath hewn in pieces three.
- 79 Just then a dragon, o'er his head,  
 His fatal venom pouring, flew;  
 And Finn himself at length lay dead,  
 Whom poison, and not arms, subdued.
- 80 When Finn thus Holdan, furious, saw,  
 By poison, and not arms, subdued,  
 Then Vinland king the third, straightway,  
 With his good sword in twain he hewed.
- 81 Then fast and swiftly Holdan rides  
 All through the forest dark and green;  
 Nor hawk, nor hound, nor beast besides,  
 So swift and fast was ever seen.
- 82 His silken sails he raises then,  
 On yards of gold extended wide:  
 His sails he never furls again,  
 Till Ireland from the helm he spied.
- 83 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid,  
 Was sitting in her window-bay : \*

---

\* *Bay*-window seems more correct than *bow*-window, though the two are used indifferently. *Bay* is simply *hollow* or *open*, and has the same sense when applied to a window as when applied to a portion of the ocean.

- “That is not Finn the Fair,” she said,  
“Who yonder guides his helm this way.”
- 84 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid, —  
In wealth and beauty rich was she, —  
“That is not Finn the Fair,” she said,  
“Full well I know that is not he.”
- 85 Above the beds of whitest sand,  
Her anchor cast, the vessel lay :  
Holdan the Strong the first did stand  
Upon the Irish coast that day ; —
- 86 And then, within the garden nigh,  
His gorgeous mantle o'er him threw ;  
And, so attired, with bearing high,  
Toward princess Ingeborg he drew.
- 87 “Hail ! Ingeborg ! thou royal maid !  
Both fair and beautiful art thou :  
Wilt thou this prince elect,” he said,  
“And Ireland's king create him now ?”
- 88 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid, —  
She clasped a wand of purest gold, —  
“None, after Finn the Fair,” she said,  
“In love I ever more can hold.”
- 89 Then Ingeborg, the royal maid, —  
Whom deepest grief did sore oppress, —  
“None now, since Finn the Fair is dead,  
Can I as husband e'er address.”
- 90 One night, within the citadel,  
This royal maid she rested there ;  
But soon, o'ercome, a victim fell  
To sorrow, grief, and black despair.
- 91 Then fast within the citadel,  
Full many a year lived Holdan Strong ;  
But heavy care, I ween full well,  
Through day and night oppressed him long.

Verily, quoth the doctor, at the conclusion of this ballad, this is a wonderful history. Why, what with towns, villages, and citadels, destroyed by fire and sword, — knights slain, — and other acts achieved, the “famous ballad of Chevy Chase,” where

“In one day, fifty knights were slain,  
With lords of great renown,”

is nothing to it. I’ faith, Samson himself, with the jaw-bone of the ass, never did so much execution as this Finn the Fair, who, single-handed, fought twelve hundred men, and killed them all save one.

He must certainly have had rather a hard time of it, I should think, said Mr. Cassall. It was quite a pity the dragon should spit upon him, just as he was about to slay his last man, and thus snatch from him his triumph, and the high reward of the hand of “Ingeborg, the royal maid.” Nobody can doubt the antiquity of this ballad, that is very clear. If ever any thing bore about it internal evidence of its antiquity, this does.

True, said Mr. Norset; and therefore not even the doctor can say of it, as the Quaker said of “Paradise Lost,” that it *proves nothing*. It clearly proves the knowledge of Vinland possessed by the Northmen resident in the Faroe Isles, at the early date at which it was composed.

It is very well, however, said the doctor, that you have got something else besides this ballad, in order to show that the Northmen discovered Vinland.

Really, doctor, you are very perverse; — excuse my speaking freely. I never pretended that this ballad proves the discoveries of the Northmen, or of any body else. I only pretended that it proves that Vinland, (which you have seen, and which nobody ever doubted,

to be in America,\*) was known to Europeans long anterior to the time of Colon; and thus it affords corroborative testimony to the truth of the accounts of the discovery of Vinland which we have already discussed. I suppose you do n't pretend to imagine that this ballad happened, by mere *accidental coincidence*, to make mention of the same land, the discovery of which is detailed in the narratives?

Why, nō, I do n't mean that; only you must not make *an ancient ballad* of too much authority.

If I were to do so, doctor, you might well say that the whole argument which I have been supporting, is not "worth *an old song*." No such thing, however. I maintain that I have already, by the exhibition of the overwhelming mass of internal evidence contained in the narratives themselves, completely *demonstrated* the truth of the positions which I have been endeavoring to establish. All that I thus now adduce, and even all that I

\* In *Bancroft's* "History of the United States," (fourth edition, vol. i. p. 6,) it is stated, in the course of some most remarkable observations as to these discoveries of the Northmen, — which will be noticed in note A, at the end of the volume, — that "Vinland has been sought in all directions, from Greenland and the St. Lawrence to Africa." That statement is directly contrary to fact; and it is not a little remarkable, that *every one* of the three references made in that work in support of that statement, proves the *direct opposite* to be the fact; namely, that *Helluland, Markland, and Vinland*, were situated to the south of, and at no great distance from, Greenland. *The situations are, in all three, laid down in the most specific and distinct terms possible; it being added to each account, that some had thought that these coasts, beyond Vinland, extended so far that they reached to Africa; — an addition which testifies, at the same time, to the authenticity of the documents, — since the situation of Vinland, as known to, and described by, these writers, corresponds precisely with that laid down in all other authorities, as being within a reasonable distance to the south of Green-*

shall adduce, from the second class of documents, is merely interesting corroborative and illustrative testimony, as I may term it. Does that satisfy you?

Yes; I will take that explanation. I did not know exactly how far you intended to make this ballad go.

And you thought you would catch me tripping, if you could, aye? I understand you, doctor, said Mr. Norset, smiling.

Have we now, then, taken notice of all the written documents relating to Vinland?

Yes, I believe we have taken a review of the whole; though, as to a large portion, the mention has been no more than a bare allusion.

Are there, then, no allusions made to any expeditions to Vinland subsequent to that of Thorfinn?

You will remember that the expedition of Freydis and the brothers Helgi and Finnbogi, took place subsequently to that of Thorfinn.\* It is very probable that detailed

land; and since yet there is an error in speaking of it as extending so far as to join Africa; and to the extent of the voyages of the Northmen to the south, as made by *Thorvald's* party, &c.; whence the ideas of the *still further* extent of the country had arisen. It is to be presumed that the errors in statement, in this portion of Mr. Bancroft's otherwise valuable and interesting work, originated in the prejudiced view in which all accounts, which might seem to detract from the merit of Colon were beheld, and not in any designed misrepresentation. It is proper to add that Vinland has never yet been sought for, or, in any work except Mr. Bancroft's, been, in the slightest degree, hinted to have existed, in either Greenland or Africa. It has been uniformly stated to have been a portion of North America; and the difference in assigning its precise locality has never been very great. The difference which has existed is exceedingly easy to be explained, originating in a simple error in calculation. See, ante, chap. ii. p. 109. It is difficult to conceive how any one, who has paid the slightest attention to this subject, should be unacquainted with, or have really mistaken, these facts.

\* See, ante, p. 150.



narratives may also exist of other expeditions of early explorers in those parts; but those here published are amply sufficient to establish the points which I have in view, —

No hint, then, is given in this volume, interrupted the doctor, of any recorded visit to Vinland after that of Freydis?

I did not say that, doctor; I intimated only that no detailed narrative is given. There are allusions to other visits, and that, too, in terms which render it certain that such expeditions were frequent.

When, and by whom, were they made?

That is more than I can pretend to tell you. It is probable that they became so frequent that no separate record was kept of them after the expeditions of the early explorers.\* The following passage, in the "account of Eirek the Red, and of Greenland," † renders it certain that such expeditions were frequent. It occurs at the commencement of the narrative of the expedition of Freydis, which it seemed unnecessary to detail to you. "Expeditions to Vinland became now very frequent matters of consideration, *for that expedition was commonly esteemed both lucrative and honorable.*" You will observe that this passage occurs in the account relating almost exclusively to Greenland, whence all the exploring expeditions to Vinland had departed. It is an internal evidence of truth, that it occurs in this, and not in the

---

\* In addition to this it must be remembered that, when, as will presently be seen, the settlements in Greenland were destroyed and broken up, the greater portion of the records of that country, — from which it was that the voyages to Vinland, &c. were made, — would be lost or destroyed, so that the details of expeditions, if any were recorded, would be lost also.

† Antiq. Am. p. 65.

*other* account. I presume you will not dispute the importance of this passage?

It certainly is a striking passage, said the doctor, in a tone indicative half of surprise, and half of disappointment; but I should very much like to have some positive records of some of these expeditions.

Perhaps I can give you some clue of that kind, doctor; but suppose we discuss first, as these expeditions were at a later date, the proposition of the establishment of permanent colonies by the Northmen, at this remote period, in their discoveries in the western hemisphere.

Permanent colonies! exclaimed the doctor; we have no allusions which can favor that idea.

Let us consider that point a little more carefully, doctor, and you may think differently. Iceland is at least as much an American island as St. Domingo, or any of the West Indies; and no one will dispute that a colony was established there by the Northmen, which exists to this day, exhibiting a high degree of intellectual and moral cultivation. Neither will any one pretend to dispute the settlement and long continuance of a flourishing colony in Greenland,—as much a part of North America as Newfoundland or Florida. It is certain and undoubted, then, that the Northmen did establish permanent and flourishing colonies in their discoveries in the western hemisphere, and on the American quarter of the globe, more than six centuries before the time of Colon. This you will not pretend to dispute, I presume?

The doctor seemed taken by surprise, and, after some hesitation, answered,—I never viewed those settlements in that light before.

I can't help that, answered Mr. Norset; perhaps you never considered the landing of Colon on the island of St. Domingo, and the settlement of a colony there by the

Spaniards under him, in the light of the settlement of America?

The doctor seemed more confused, and less able to reply than before. After a silence of a few moments, Mr. Norset continued:—

You know that these acts with reference to St. Domingo have been generally considered as the settlement of the country, and justly so. It is equally or rather more necessary and just that the acts of the Northmen, with reference to Iceland and Greenland, should be considered as the settlement of America by them; and the results of those settlements have been far happier than the results of the Spanish settlements.

Then you do not pretend to assert that any settlement was formed by them in the more southern part of this continent of North America,—in Vinland, or otherwise?

I do not pretend to assert positively that such was the case, or even to lay very much stress upon the probability of such having been the case. Still there *is* considerable probability that such settlement was formed.\*

Pray, tell me how you would make that appear.

You must remember, doctor, that, though several leaders are stated to have accompanied Thorfinn to Vinland,—namely, Snorri Thorbrandson, Biarni Grimolfson, and Thorhall Gamlason,—y<sup>e</sup>t the return of only Thorfinn and Biarni is related. It is very possible, therefore, that Snorri Thorbrandson and Thorhall Gamlason, with their men, may have chosen to remain in Vinland, some perhaps at Hóp, others at Straumfiord, permanently. We know that this was the intention of all, when they went out, and that they took with them all kinds of live stock for the purpose. Though Thorfinn and his men,

---

\* See, ante, pp. 184 and 186, as to the names *Hóp* and *Ness*.

and Biarni with his men, chose to return, it does not follow that Snorri and Thorhall and their followers did so. They may have remained, and their men intermarried with the natives, and thus some Norse customs and words, — as we have seen in the case of Hóp and of Nessat, the two localities with which we know that they were best acquainted, — have been retained. I say that this is *probable*; I do not pretend to assert that it is fact.\*

Since you yourself profess that we have now got into the region of doubt only, said the doctor, let us quit it, and turn to those more certain hints which you said exist of visits to this country.

---

\* It is worthy of remark, that many authors have stated the fact of the settlement of a colony by the Northmen in Vinland as a matter of which there can be no doubt. Thus, *Pinkerton*, vol. i. p. 342, — “The little colony settled in Vinland, about 1006, perished from intestine divisions.” *Wheaton*, History of the Northmen, p. 28, &c. — “A part of Thorfinn’s company still remained in Vinland, and they were afterwards joined by two Icelandic chieftains, &c. . . . No subsequent traces of the Norman colony in America are to be found until the year 1059, when it is said that an Irish or Saxon priest, named Jon or John, who had preached for some time as a missionary in Iceland, went to Vinland, for the purpose of converting the colonists to Christianity, where he was murdered by the heathens.” Of this John notice will be taken presently in the text. This author adds, — “The colony established by them (the Northmen) probably perished in the same manner with the ancient establishments in Greenland. Some faint traces of its existence may, perhaps, be found in the relations of the Jesuit missionaries respecting a native tribe in the district of Gaspe, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, who are said to have attained a certain degree of civilization, to have worshipped the sun, and observed the position of the stars. Others revered the symbol of the cross, before the arrival of the French missionaries, which, according to their tradition, had been taught them by a venerable person, who cured, by this means, a terrible epidemic which raged among them.” *Henderson’s Iceland*, Amer. ed. p. 17. “The American continent was visited, &c. and a

Willingly. A visit of one John, an Irish or Saxon priest, to Vinland, in 1059, is recorded by some authorities. It is stated that he went for the purpose of preaching Christianity, and that he was killed in the country. Detailed relations are, moreover, given of voyages made hither by two Venetians, by name Zeni, in the service of a northern prince, in the fourteenth century, and who found marks of the former voyages. Both these accounts, however, — though, if it were desired to support a fabricated tale, they might aid us much, — as my object is solely the ascertainment of *truth*, ought, I think, after a candid examination at the bar of severe historical criticism, to be rejected as probably not genuine; the former, because it seems probable that it was not Vinland, but a district in Europe, which John visited, there being some

---

colony of Norwegians was afterwards settled there, and continued to trade with the natives for the period of nearly two centuries after the country had been discovered." Many other quotations to the same effect might be made from other works. Thus it will be seen that the fact of the settlement of a permanent colony in New England by the Northmen is considered by these authorities, — *and they are high ones*, — as established beyond doubt. Since, however, the author of this work is anxious to fix the reader's attention on no proposition, as established, which he cannot *demonstrate* to be necessarily true by the most rigid criticism of original authorities, he is unwilling to claim this proposition, of the *settlement of a permanent colony* in Vinland by the Northmen, as one which is established. He does not himself consider that it is so, but conceives that there exists a *probability* of its being fact. It is the less necessary to lay any stress upon the probability of this being the fact, in order to establish the importance of the *results* of the discoveries of the Northmen in America, inasmuch as it is beyond the possibility of controversy that important and flourishing colonies were established by them in Iceland and Greenland, both, indisputably, immediate members of that quarter of the globe, — portions of the western hemisphere.

inconsistencies in the account of his visiting Vinland ; \* the latter, because no accounts were published, or ever known to have existed, of the voyages narrated, of an earlier date than 1558 ; † and thus, although the accounts themselves do not seem wholly improbable, their truth is incapable of being rigidly tested, since they were not announced till after the discoveries of Colon and Cabot.

We are still, then, said the doctor, as much in the land of doubt as ever. Shall we find no more rest for the soles of our feet ?

O yes, answered Mr. Norset ; we have now done with the doubtful, and come again to the certain and undoubtedly authentic. We find it related in the ancient and *contemporary* ‡ and indisputably authentic “ Annals of Iceland,” that, in the year 1121, EIREK, bishop of Greenland, sailed thence to Vinland.

Well, said the doctor, it seems to me that here again you are involved in some kind of contradiction. You spoke of there having been, in all probability, so many expeditions to Vinland that no separate record was kept of them ; and yet we here find a record of Bishop Eirek’s expedition. How do you explain this ?

There is not the slightest difficulty about the matter, doctor, if you will only look at it in a straight-forward, honest manner, and not strive to discover flaws at every turn. Do n’t you often see it stated, in the London papers, that the lord chancellor went from his house in ——— street to the House of Lords, at such and such o’clock ? Why should his particular progress be mentioned, when hundreds of lords and gentlemen walk the same route

\* See *Antiq. Am.* p. 461.

† See *Irving’s “Columbus,”* (N. Y. ed.) vol. 2, p. 274.

‡ See *Antiq. Am.* p. 256, &c.

every day? Just because the lord chancellor happens to hold one of the highest and most important stations in the empire; and it is well that it should be made publicly known whether or not he is attentive to his duty. Well, it is just the same in the case before us. Hundreds might have gone from Greenland to Vinland, and their expeditions not have been esteemed matters worthy of record; but Eirek was *bishop of Greenland*: he held the most important and dignified office in that important colony. The circumstance of *his* making a voyage to Vinland was, then, a circumstance worthy of all record, and was likely to be noticed, even in an Icelandic chronicle.

What was the object of his visit?

Of that we are not informed. The "Annals" of those days were little more than calendars of events, with no detail of cause or consequence. It is only rational to presume that he went thither for the purpose either of attempting the conversion of the natives to Christianity, or of performing episcopal offices among the colonists, — the descendants of those whose progress we have followed,\* and whose numbers had probably been increased by subsequent settlers. Eirek was the *first* bishop of Greenland † and would esteem it his duty to visit all settlements immediately connected, as Vinland was, with Greenland. No record exists of the return of Eirek. It is therefore to be presumed that he ended his days in Vinland.

And this, then, is the latest record that exists of the continent of North America being visited by the Northmen? said the doctor inquiringly.

---

\* See note to page 232, ante. The voyage of Eirek to Vinland is in itself corroborative of the probable existence of a colony there.

† Excerpt. ex. Annal. Island. 1121 *al.* and Antiq. Am. p. 407.

Not so, either, answered Mr. Norset. We find it incidentally mentioned in the same "Annals of Iceland," in a list of disasters from tempests which occurred in the year 1347, that, in that year, a *Greenland ship, which had been on a voyage to Markland*, was driven, by stress of weather, to the port of Straumfiord, in Iceland. This is mentioned in such a manner as to render it self-evident that the ship had been to Markland on a regular trading voyage,\* — most probably, as many trading voyages are made thither now for timber. The mode in which the voyage is mentioned, indicates clearly, also, that such voyages were frequent.

But how does it happen, asked Mr. Cassall, that, if intercourse was thus kept up for so long a time with the continent of America, which it would certainly seem impossible any longer to doubt, the circumstance has not been generally known, or that this intercourse at any time ceased?

The reason of this is clear. The intercourse with the continent was always kept up through Greenland, as the nearest point to it. Now Greenland itself, though for four centuries a flourishing and populous colony, having constant intercourse with the parent state in Europe, underwent the same fate as Vinland has certainly done. Her colony was gradually destroyed by the change of climate,† and by contests with the natives, and was neglected by the parent state, owing to the wars which raged between her and her neighbors. ‡ For nearly three cen-

\* Antiq. Am. p. 265.

† See, ante, p. 61, for an explanation of the cause of this.

‡ There is a remarkable obscurity, it may be termed *mystery*, hanging over the fate of the colony in Greenland. The last bishop was appointed in 1406. *Since that time the colony has never been heard of.* It has by many, until recently, been supposed that it still existed,



turies the land was as if it had never been known. Instead of the frequent intercourse formerly had with it from Iceland and Norway and Denmark, none now took place, with mere casual and very rare exceptions. Of course, then, all expeditions immediately connected with its commercial relations ceased also; and, ceasing, were forgotten in general, although the records of them lived, as we have seen, in traditions long before that time committed to writing, and existing in the libraries of the learned. These were circumstances, it must be obvious, over which the settlers could have no control. *They cannot, therefore, detract from the merit and honor of the discovery of, and settlement in the western hemisphere by, the Northmen,*

---

though cut off from all communication with the rest of the world. That communication ceased, as hinted in the text, owing to the wars which broke out between the Danes and Swedes. When the colony was last heard of, in the fifteenth century, *it consisted of 280 villages.* It seems impossible to conceive but that it must have existed for some time after intercourse with the parent state had ceased. That cessation must, however, have contributed very much to its decline, since, owing to the climate, very much even of the necessities and simple decencies of life must have been supplied from Europe. Disease, want, and insubordination would probably be the result of these circumstances, which the increasing rigor of the climate, owing to the descent of the arctic ice, would tend to increase. Thus would the colonists become an easy prey to the attacks of the natives. Certain it is, that, while extensive ruins have been found all along the line of the ancient settlements, no living traces of the colony itself have ever been discovered. *It has "died and left no sign."* See *Antiq. Am. De Grœlandia*, An interesting volume on the antiquities of Greenland is about to appear, under the auspices of the Society of Northern Antiquarians. A brief account of Greenland and its ancient settlement will be found in the *Penny Magazine* for October, 1838, p. 385. This account is, as far as it goes, generally correct, although the statements as to Gunnbiorn are erroneous. See, ante, pp. 60, 61 and 63.

How long is it, asked Mr. Cassall, since Greenland has again become the seat of a colony, or since intercourse has again been opened between her and Europe?

It is only since 1721 that it has again attracted any attention. Colonies have, since that date, been again planted there from the mother country, of the ancient colonists.

And about what date did the desertion of the ancient colony take place?

The desertion of Greenland took place more than half a century before the expeditions of Colon, and the discovery of Newfoundland by Cabot.\*

Let us see, said Mr. Cassall, Colon's first voyage took place in 1492, and Cabot's in 1497. Greenland was then deserted at the beginning or middle of the fifteenth century?

It was so, answered Mr. Norset. But, touching Cabot's visit to, and discovery of, Newfoundland, I must remark that, as Colon had in all probability gained some notion of the existence of land in the western ocean during his visit to Iceland, so Cabot, in his intercourse with the Danish monarch, between whom and the merchants of England he negotiated, in the year 1495, concerning the trade with Iceland, — which negotiations would necessarily lead him into minute investigations with respect to Iceland and her connections, — had, in all likelihood, obtained some knowledge of the existence and situation of the northern portion of the American continent; that is, Vinland, Markland, Helluland, and Greenland. At any rate, it is a remarkable fact, that his charter was obtained from Henry VII, the very next year after these negotiations had been concluded, and his expedition to Newfound-

---

\* As this family became Anglicised, the Anglicised name may properly be retained.

land (Helluland) was undertaken in the year following. It is remarkable, too, that he appears to have steered directly for that land with the position of which the Icelanders would generally be most familiar, namely, the more directly northward portion of the continent of North America.

Poor Cabot! — you snatch his laurels from him also. But I do not comprehend your last allusion. Pray, explain it.

Let me allude to your first remark in the first place. I wish you would understand that I am desiring to snatch no laurels from the head of Cabot, or of any one else. His was a noble and an enterprising expedition. But he must have got the idea into his head, in some way, that he should find *something* by sailing west. Else he would have been an arrant fool, and so would Colon, for ever undertaking such an expedition. All I have done is to explain *how* these ideas got into the heads of either. His name is still to be honored, as the first European *in recent times*, that is, in immediate connection with *present* settlements in the lands visited, who touched the shores of the *continent* of North America. It appears however to me, to be evident that he himself did not consider the land visited as a discovery, but only as a land visited or found *anew*. The very name given to the land visited by him, — *Newfoundland*, — indicates a consciousness that this was only a *re-discovery*, and not the original discovery of the land.\*

---

\* Even Mr. Bancroft, though he professes to discredit the whole account of the discoveries of the Northmen, (Hist. U. S. p. 6 and 7, and see this passage examined in note A,) contradicts himself in a remarkable manner, only two pages after his denunciation of those discoveries, and *virtually admits* their truth, and even suggests that

Really, said the doctor, I wo n't give up Cabot in this way, especially when we have no record of any visitation to Newfoundland by the Northmen for 500 years, or nearly so, before the time of Cabot.

Very likely, doctor, you may not like to give up Cabot, as you call it; — why, I cannot tell; but you are wrong as to the non-visitation of Newfoundland by the Northmen during all this period. We have two distinct records of visits made to it, — *records, I beg you particularly to observe, which exist to this day, in the handwriting of contemporaries of the events recorded.*\* Two brothers, Adalbrand and Thorvald, whose names are well known in the Icelandic history of that period, did visit this very land in the year 1285; and it is a remarkable fact, that this land is spoken of in the records of their visit, the authenticity of which, *as contemporary records*, is beyond the possibility of question, in the very same terms, in the Icelandic language, that it was called by Cabot's companions; which name it has ever since retained; namely, "NYJA FUNDU LAND," literally, *Newfoundland*. The situation of this *Nyja fundu land* is distinctly stated; and it may be said to be physically impossible that any other than Newfoundland can be the locality designated. It is also remarkable, as confirmatory of this being the locality designated, that, in *some* of the ancient records, some islands, called "DUNEYAR," (or *feather islands*,) are spoken of as having been discovered. Now, it is well known that this name might,

---

Cabot's expedition, perhaps, had some connection with them. His words are these, (p. 8.) — "Nor is it impossible that some uncertain traditions respecting the remote *discoveries which Icelanders had made* in Greenland towards the northwest, where the land did nearest meet, should have excited firm and pregnant conjectures."

\* See *Antiq. Am.* pp. 256, 257 and 259.

with great propriety, be applied to most of the islands on the Newfoundland coast, where the Canada duck so much abounds, that the eggs, which are found covering the ground at certain seasons of the year, are imported in great quantities into the United States and elsewhere.

Then this land is not, in these records, identified with Helluland, which we have seen to be Newfoundland, said Mr. Cassall. How do you explain that circumstance?

It may easily be explained in many ways. The writer of these brief records, which merely state the *fact* of the voyage of Adalbrand and Thorvald, might have been ignorant of the records of the former visits to Helluland. You will remember that it was esteemed an *uninviting shore*, and probably it was never visited again after the first explorations. It would necessarily, therefore, be less familiar than Markland and Vinland. Moreover, the visit of Adalbrand and Thorvald was accidental, not designed. The recorders of the fact, therefore, would merely state the fact, without inquiring whether it was the same as that already known as Helluland, which all their contemporary geographers described, however, as lying in that situation.

Were there no further measures taken with reference to the land thus visited? Was no notice taken, at this time, of its existence?

Circumstances prevented the brothers from prosecuting their explorations. Adalbrand died in the year following, and Thorvald became involved in violent and agitating controversies, by which his attention was drawn in a completely contrary direction. However, the matter did not die out unheeded. Eirik, king of Norway, determined to have the land further explored; and it is expressly recorded by the same *contemporary* annalists that, in the year 1288, one ROLF was sent out, by the

king, for the *especial purpose of exploring*.\* We have no records of the result of his explorations, but the surname given to him, *Lauda-Rolf*, leads us to presume that they were extensive.

That seems satisfactory as far as it goes, said Mr. Cassall.

It is satisfactory, also, in this respect, observed Mr. Norset; however much any unreasonable sceptic may be inclined to cavil at the authenticity of the records of the discovery of Helluland, Markland, or Vinland, — Greenland it is impossible for a moment to doubt, — by the Northmen in the tenth century, *it is utterly impossible for any one to doubt the authenticity of these records of the voyages of Adalbrand and Thorvald and Rolf to the coast of the continent of North America in the thirteenth century.*† So that, at any rate, the Northmen preceded Cabot by two centuries in their exploration of the North American continent. It will, however, I think, be of little use to place daylight clearness before the vision of him who cannot be convinced, by such evidence as I have adduced, of the authenticity of the records of the more ancient expeditions of the Northmen.

I confess, said Mr. Cassall, that you have compelled me to acknowledge the same thing, though, at first, I little thought that such evidence could be adduced. Let us hear what the doctor has to say upon the subject. Doctor, what have you now to say to the truth of the proposition which startled you so much at first, — that America, the very shores of New England, were discov-

\* Antiq. Am. p. 263.

† It is worthy of observation, that some of the manuscripts which exist, detailing the discoveries of the Northmen in the western hemisphere, (as detailed in chapters ii. and iii.) are of an actually *older date* than the time of these later recorded expeditions.

ered by the Northmen in the tenth century, five centuries before the time of Colon?

Humph! said the doctor, not liking such a direct mode of interrogation, and wishing to give an evasive answer; I think Colon's discoveries have been very beneficial.

Come, come, doctor, said Mr. Norset, jocularly; we will not let you off in that way. You are welcome, if it pleases you, to talk of "Colon's discoveries." I will allow that he discovered the West Indies, — the most important part of America, doubtless, in your opinion, — five centuries after the discovery of the continent of North America by the Northmen. He never discovered or visited one inch of this northern continent,\* which, in my humble opinion, is of far higher importance than all the Indies, East and West. More credit is due to Cabot than to him, on that score. I see how it is, doctor; you put me mind of what is said in Hudibras, that

"A man convinced against his will,  
Is of the same opinion still;  
Which he may adhere to, or disown,  
For reasons to himself best known."

Now you know well enough, doctor, that you are *convinced* of the truth of these discoveries. You have some

---

\* It must not be imagined that this is written in ignorance of the events of the third and fourth voyages of Colon. The neighborhood of Cape Honduras cannot certainly be properly called a part of the continent of North America, in reference to the vastness and extent of that continent, of which Columbus never had any idea. It is well known, too, that he merely coasted along that shore and the shore of Paria to a small extent, and made no stay, and neither effected nor attempted any settlement thereupon. He effected a settlement in St. Domingo only. It will be shown, in note A, that the Northmen had a *correct idea* of the extent of the new continent which they had discovered, and that they never, as did Colon, confused it with Asia, but considered it as a *distinct continent*.

candor in you, after all, at bottom, though you do n't like to own it:—there's a compliment for you. You know you could not help acknowledging, this morning, that there was *something* in the narrative of Leif. It has been "against your will" to be thus convinced; but, certainly, doctor, the TRUTH is worth having at any price,—even the relinquishment of an old and long-cherished notion. So I beg you won't at one time "adhere to," and at another "disown," your conviction, for any reasons, but frankly confess that you are satisfied of the established truth of the proposition,—*that the Northmen discovered and explored the continent of North America in the tenth century, and that not merely by accident, and as driven here by stress of weather, but in expeditions undertaken for the express purpose of exploration and settlement; and that residences of several years were, at different times, fixed here, and probably permanent colonies established.*

But the doctor was not accustomed to give a direct answer to any question which in any way involved a compromise of his prejudices, or an acknowledgment of any conviction of his own error or ignorance. He, therefore, again evaded a reply,—in which evasion, however, was necessarily implied the acknowledgment of the justice of Mr. Norset's remarks, by observing,—

But, surely, Mr. Norset, you do not conceive that extensive colonies were founded here?

No; it would seem improbable that extensive colonies were founded on this part of the continent. They were so in Greenland, however. The natives were then, in these regions, existing in numbers and power sufficient to resist any invasion of such small parties as the Northmen could bring. The country had not then been devastated by disease, as when subsequent colonists landed here.



The probability is, that some remained here, who intermarried with the natives, and whose descendants soon became mixed with them so as to be hardly distinguishable. There can be no doubt, however, that the country was *visited* continuously till the colonies of Greenland were deserted; and different parties probably remained here at different times, and settled in the country.

It is certainly, observed Mr. Cassall, a very interesting thing to know that the Northmen, so long ago, visited this country, and were especially acquainted with this part of it in which we now are, — New England, — and this particular neighborhood more especially.

It is interesting, said Mr. Norset, and it will become more so, when, as I shall show you, it can be rendered pretty nearly certain that remains of these very Northmen exist here now. Rhode Island seems to have been a favorite resort of theirs, for many of their works are here.

That remains to be proved, interrupted the doctor.

So it does, said Mr. Norset; but, however, the proof of it will have nothing to do with the truth of the discoveries themselves. It will merely add to the interest of the subject, to know that we have about us visible and tangible signs of these discoveries, and of the presence of the discoverers here.

You stated, observed the doctor, that there are some *minor narratives* contained in that volume, and you have intimated that they relate to visits made to the more southern parts of the continent of North America. We must not forget these.

We will not forget them, doctor; but they are not so important as those which we have already examined, nor will they occupy our attention so long. They are less precise, though not less authentic, and leave us more

with a *cue* to search for something more, than with any positive and definite knowledge of any thing, in the shape of details, beyond the mere fact of such visits having been made, and of the existence and extent of the continent having been well known. They are curious, however, and the incidents related in them may be called romantic. They also have an immediate bearing upon the question of the discovery of the continent of North America. They will therefore be interesting.

The sooner we have them the better, so that we may have the whole fresh in our minds together. Suppose we spend to-morrow morning over them. What say you?

With all my heart, doctor. I hope neither the ghost of Colon nor of Cabot will rise in rebuke of you this night, and frighten you from any further investigation of the subject.

I don't care for Colon, or Cabot either, said the doctor, with affected carelessness, but evidently not well pleased at the laugh being turned against him for his zealous opposition to any infringement of the supposed "vested rights" of those two worthies, which had been established by the authority of "*universal consent*," through so many centuries.

I am glad to hear it, doctor. Never care for old friends in adversity, you know, is the order of the day. Well, I am going to spend the evening in the neighborhood of some of the remains of your new friends, the Northmen, which I intend that you shall visit with me to-morrow.

The doctor's annoyance increased at these last remarks. He bit his lip, and walked out of the room without saying a word.

## CHAPTER V.

IRISH in America. — NORTHMEN in HUTRAMANNALAND, (Southern States of United States.) — ARI MARSON (A. D. 983.) — History of BIORN ASBRANDSON. — Voyage of GUDLEIF GUDLAUGSON.

SOON after breakfast, next morning, the different parties at Mrs. Goff's boarding-house, decidedly the pleasantest in Newport, made their arrangements for the morning. Some ordered carriages to go down to the beach; others preferred to spend the hours in boating on the neighboring bay. But our worthy friend, Dr. Dubital, though invited to join parties for each purpose, refused all solicitations.

No sooner had the various seekers after pleasure in these different modes taken their departure, than the doctor reminded Mr. Norset of his promise, to continue the subject to which the greater portion of the previous day had been devoted, saying, in his peculiar manner, —

You have forgotten the Northmen, have n't you?

Your question reminds me, answered Mr. Norset, laughing, of the judicious answer of the Quaker to one who thus phrased his interrogatory, — “You *could n't* lend me sixpence, *could* you?” “Friend,” — said he, with the gravity distinguishing the much respected body to which he belonged, — “Friend, I do not understand thee; thou first tellest me a lie, and then askest me a question.” Now, doctor, you *never* heard that before, *did* you?

Pray, Mr. Norset, said the doctor, somewhat crustily, let us have no more of your jokes.

Jokes! doctor; I never joke. Gravity, sir, is the very

essence of my nature. I'm as grave, sir, as the man they found at Fall River the other day.

Man found at Fall River! what do you mean?

You *don't* mean to say you have not heard of that, doctor, *do* you? Pray, forgive me; I'll follow a bad example no more. Seriously and soberly, they found a Northman up at Fall River the other day.

Found a Northman! upon my word, Mr. Norset, I shall grow provoked, presently, if you speak so in enigmas.

Nay, doctor; it is as clear as daylight, if you could but see it.

See what? cried the doctor, elevating his voice, and half angrily.

The Northman, answered Mr. Norset quietly, evidently much amused at the doctor's petulance, and somewhat inclined to make merry at his expense.

What Northman? asked the doctor, raising his voice almost to a shout.

Nay, that's more than I can tell; I never had the pleasure of his acquaintance, answered Mr. Norset.

Then how do you know he was a Northman?

Because he carried a tongue on his breast, and that told me so; and another tied round him, and that told me so, too.

What, in the name of goodness, do you mean? again asked the doctor, looking exceedingly puzzled, but his curiosity being evidently highly excited.

Why, that's "a bone for you to pick," doctor, as the wife of the Irish chieftain answered, with her last gasp of breath, to her husband's earnest question.

Well, sir, said the doctor, angrily, I'm not going to pick any bones with you, at any rate. I stayed at home on purpose to hear about the Northmen; but I am sorry

I did not go down to the beach, as I had otherwise intended.

Pray, doctor, don't be offended. Who would have dreamed of your taking the matter so seriously. No offence, doctor ; no offence. I'm sure you try to give me bones enough to pick, when you attempt, as you do, to tear every hole you can in the coats of these poor Northmen ; and yet you see you cannot take a single bone from me, but fling it back in dudgeon. However, let that pass. I'll tell you all about the Northman at Fall River by and by. Meantime, let us sit down and take the matter quietly.

The doctor was somewhat pacified by Mr. Norset's tone and manner, and took his seat without further ceremony. Mr. Cassall shortly after entered.

Shall we now proceed, said the doctor, to the subject ? What is it, Mr. Norset, that we have to hear about the Northmen this morning ? for you did not fully explain it yesterday. You merely stated that there are some *minor narratives*, which relate to visits made to the southern portion of these United States.

We shall have to take a passing glance at others besides the Northmen, this morning, said Mr. Norset, though the chief portion of these *minor narratives* relates, as before, to expeditions of the Northmen. We shall meet with allusions which would seem to indicate that the IRISH were acquainted with the southern parts of North America about the same time that the Northmen discovered the northern parts of the same continent.

What ! exclaimed the doctor ; the *Irish* ! Then your Northmen, after all, were not the discoverers of America.

I never wished, doctor, to take to my Northmen, as you call them, any credit which does not belong to them.

As far as we have any allusions to, or distinct authentic records of, voyages and expeditions to America, the Northmen were the first Europeans who visited this continent. The point, however, which it has been my object to prove to you is, that they *did* discover and explore America in the tenth century, not that they were the FIRST who ever visited these shores, though I think there can be no doubt that such was the fact. The allusions to the Irish are, as you will see, vague, and do not give us any *certain* information. Nor does it appear that, if they are to be considered as rendering the Irish expeditions certain, those expeditions were *anterior* to the expeditions of the Northmen, while these allusions, and the whole of the ancient documents, *do* render it perfectly clear that the Northmen were *in no degree aware*, when they discovered and first visited Vinland and the rest, that these coasts had any connection with the parts visited by the Irish. HUITRAMANNALAND, or IRLAND IT MIKLA, (Great Ireland,) as the parts visited by the Irish were called, appears to have been considered an island, until the description received by Thorfinn and his companions of the country beyond Vinland; and the adventures presently to be recorded, induced the Northmen to believe that Huitramannaland must *lie beyond* but *adjoin* Vinland. No permanent settlement appears to have been ever made by the Irish in this Huitramannaland.

How, then, came it to be called *Great Ireland*? asked the doctor.

Simply because Ireland was the "western country," according to the appellation of the Northmen, and Huitramannaland lay to the west of Ireland. This circumstance, and the visitation of the land by the Irish, most probably procured it the name of Great Ireland.

The Icelanders at first knew it only by the accounts of the Irish merchants, and the latter would, not unnaturally, apply this name to the newly-discovered tract. There was no connection between the two discoveries, if that of the Irish was ever made, which remains to be proved. Supposing it correct that the Irish visited Huitramannaland about the same time that the Northmen discovered and explored all the northern shores of North America, the Northmen had still the superior honor of discovering that the whole was one vast continent, and that Huitramannaland was but a continuation of Vinland; the undoubted fact of which knowledge being possessed by them, exhibits a much grander and more sublime idea of their discoveries than ever was entertained by Colon of his discoveries, or of their *possible* reality.\*

Well, said the doctor, but you know there has been Dr. Hawkes lecturing at New York about the former race who inhabited America. Does not that rather upset the credit of your Northmen?

What do you mean, doctor? I really hardly comprehend you. We all *knew*, before Dr. Hawkes told us so, that America was inhabited long before *any* European foot touched her soil, and we shall all feel much obliged to Dr. Hawkes, or any body else, who will tell us any thing about them. But they have nothing to do with any *discoveries of America by Europeans*, any *opening a communication* between the two countries. These latter are our present points of inquiry, and of these I maintain that the Northmen were the achievers. Whoever these ancient people were, they were unknown to the eastern continent. No benefit was derived from one by the other; no communication subsisted. The Northmen first

---

\* See further on this subject, note A, at end of the volume.

made their country known, after they had become extinct, except, perhaps, in Mexico : they first opened a communication which has never ceased, and made the western hemisphere prove a most beneficial source of enterprise and place of residence. Though a part of their discoveries became, after a time, — owing, as I have shown, to *circumstances over which they had no control*, — deserted and *generally* forgotten, yet still the record of those discoveries lives, and proves their enterprise ; and their descendants still inhabit one portion of their discoveries in that western hemisphere, and are, it is not too much to say, the happiest people upon earth, the *most generally intelligent*, the *most generally moral*.\*

Perhaps your observations are just. Indeed, I don't see how they can be contradicted ; but what do you say to the alleged discoveries of the WELCH in America ?

I have little to say to them. They are as much beside the question as the existence of the ancient inhabitants of this continent. Many persons believe that the accounts of the expedition of MADOC are entirely a fable.† I will not pretend to give any opinion on the subject. Mr. Bartlett has carefully investigated this matter, and it is to be hoped that he will favor the world with the result of his investigations. Be the accounts of these circumstances true or false, it affects in no way the question of the Northmen being the first discoverers of America. It is not pretended that the expedition of prince MADOC took place until the year 1170, *nearly two centuries after the discoveries of the Northmen*.

---

\* A brief, but generally correct, and easily accessible account of Iceland, its former and present condition, will be found in the *Penny Magazine* for 1833, pp. 442 and 452.

† See p. 8, note.



To quit the ancient inhabitants and the Welch, then ; — what ground is there for supposing that the Irish ever touched upon these shores of North America ?

We find some *allusions*, in various ancient and authentic documents,\* which we will presently examine, which render it probable that the coast of America was visited by the Irish about the same time that, or a few years after, Biarni first saw it. We have already seen that it was believed, in the Faroe Isles, that Vinland was visited by the Irish, though this belief doubtless grew out of the knowledge which was had of the existence of Vinland, confused with the knowledge of the voyages of the Irish to Huitramannaland. We have also seen that, when Thorfinn and his companions were told, by the captives taken in returning home, of a certain race of men who lived in an adjoining land *beyond Vinland*, they concluded they must be inhabitants of Huitramannaland, (*white man's land*, so called probably from the *white dresses* mentioned to Thorfinn,) or *Great Ireland*.† It would seem, then, that rumors of the ex-

---

\* The circumstance of these allusions being thus made is another proof of the authenticity of all these ancient Icelandic documents, — both those which have been examined, and those which remain to be examined, — since it shows that the narrators were careful only of the truth, and did not wish to monopolize to themselves (as is insinuated by Bancroft, in his Hist. U. S. — see note A, 3) the credit of being the only people of their day who made distant expeditions.

† It would seem very probable, however, that those accounts did in reality refer to *Mexico*. They coincide with the degree of civilization known to have existed in that country anciently, and the situation, as described by the captive Skrælings, may agree with *Mexico* as well as with the country nearer *Vinland*. It was natural that the Northmen, being totally ignorant of the country, should localize the description which they heard with the land which they had heard mentioned by the Irish.

istence of Great Ireland had reached the Northmen before this time, — which was twenty-five years after the discovery of America by Biarni Heriulfson, — though they had never seen it. That, when America was discovered by them, they had no idea of the existence of Huitramannaland, and that, *until after* the voyage of Thorfinn, they had no idea of any connection existing between their discoveries and Huitramannaland, is evident, from the mode in which those discoveries are narrated, and the simple, honest, straight-forward mode in which Huitramannaland is always spoken of. The same accounts show, as I have already noticed, and as you will presently see, that they afterwards became convinced that Huitramannaland was a part of the same vast continent of which Helluland, Markland, and Vinland formed extensive portions.

Then there are no distinct detailed narratives of any Irish expeditions? said the doctor, inquiringly.

No; there are facts stated, as we have just seen, and shall presently see more fully, the truth of which almost implies that such expeditions were made.

And what authority have you for believing these statements to be correct?

Every authority, doctor. In the first place, it is evident that, if these accounts had been *fabricated* to prove the discoveries of the Northmen, we should never have had found any thing about the Irish. The fact that we do find such allusions is, then, internal evidence of the truth of the narratives in all points. Second, — one of the principal actual authorities\* for the facts stated, both as

---

\* See the incorrect statement made in Bancroft's Hist. U. S. quoted in note A, (*figure 17*.) This is a fair sample of the value of the whole of that passage.

to the visits of the Northmen and of the Irish to Great Ireland, is the *Landnamabok*, whose authenticity none, pretending any acquaintance with literary matters, will venture to doubt. Third, — there is nothing improbable in the facts stated themselves. As I observed, in our first conversation on this subject, if you look at the map and see how far it is between Ireland and Iceland, — the discovery and settlement of which latter by the Northmen, in the ninth century, we have seen to be an undoubted fact, — you can no longer, with any reason, doubt of the probability of voyages being made even to these southern regions of the continent of North America. Voyages to Iceland from Ireland were frequent.\* Why should they not have sometimes extended to America? The ocean between Ireland and Iceland is as dangerous, requires every whit as much skill in nautical science to cross it, as does the navigation of the broad Atlantic. It is little farther from Ireland to Huitramannaland than it is from Iceland to Vinland, which we have seen to have been accomplished. If, therefore, authentic histories record that the broad Atlantic *was* traversed, either by Northmen or Irish, no rational person has a right to doubt it. The *Landnamabok* and many other authentic documents do record the fact, that the voyage was made more than once by Northmen, and make allusions which seem to imply that it had been sometimes made by Irish. You have no right therefore to be unwilling to give credit to the facts thus stated, or to the allusions thus made.

Still, — to keep our attention at present on the Irish, — if such allusions do indicate such facts, one would expect that more detailed records should remain.

---

\* It would certainly, however, seem that these voyages between Iceland and Ireland were more frequently made by Icelandic merchants than by Irish.

And who can say that they do not remain? The records we have in this book are from Iceland only. They are not likely to record in detail any expeditions of Irish adventurers. It is very possible that there may exist ancient Irish manuscripts, in which these facts will be found detailed. Attention deserves to be carefully given to the investigation of this matter. Do not forget, doctor, that the tradition is common in Iceland, and the fact is, as we have seen,\* recorded in ancient and authentic documents, that Christian men were living in Iceland when the Northmen first settled there. These came *from the west*, — by which, however, is meant, not America, but Ireland; which, as I showed you, was commonly called “*the western country*,” being *west* with respect to *Norway*, the father land of all the Northmen.

What has that to do with the Irish making expeditions to America?

It proves how far across the broad ocean they had been and might be carried; for, though neither Northmen nor Irish appear to have known any thing about these *Papæ*, or their origin, but only to have *presumed* them to be Christians, and of Irish origin, from the remnants of their instruments which were found; yet, still, it is very possible that a crew may have been early driven to Iceland by storm, and taken shelter there, and nothing more have been ever heard of them in their native land, and thus this presumption be correct. That the *Papæ* were but few in number, the record of them, and the fact of their flying before the small band of first Northman settlers, clearly show. Voyages to Iceland were, however, it is well known, subsequently made from different of the

---

\* Ante, p. 58.

northern islands, England and Ireland, — so that they were accustomed to traverse the broad ocean depths.

Upon my word, said Mr. Cassall, I had no notion we should find the Irish brought into this matter. I should like to hear something more about their doings in these parts. -

I am sorry your curiosity, as well as my own, cannot be more gratified, answered Mr. Norset. All that touches at all upon them, or throws any light upon this matter, I will read to you in full; which I shall be able to do in a short space of time, as it will not open much room for debate.

I think you have given us to understand, said the doctor, that all you have here relates to the visits of the Northmen to Huitramannaland, and that all which respects the Irish is introduced merely in an incidental manner.

Just so, doctor; but what is thus introduced is on many accounts the more valuable by reason of its very incidental introduction.

Well, I see that. Before you begin, will you let us know what are the manuscripts from which these accounts are taken, and to what individuals they relate?

As to the individuals mentioned, I must state here, as in the case of the individuals mentioned in the narratives which we have already discussed, that *they are all historical personages*, — individuals whose names appear very conspicuously on the page of the external and undoubted authentic history of Iceland and Norway. As to the documents in which these facts are recorded, they may be divided into parcels. The first two relate to a man of high station and great power, named ARI MARSON, (son of Mar,) whose family and immediate descendants are still in existence. He was carried by tempest to Huitra-

mannaland in 983. The first authority for this is that extremely ancient and valuable record, the *Landnamabok*; the second, a more recent manuscript, but one copied from ancient records. The other two relate to the history and adventures of one BIORN ASBRANDSON BREIDVIKINGAKAPPI,—a man of great note in his day,—and to a voyage made, and interview had with the same Biorn, by one GUDLEIF GUDLAUGSON.\* The authorities for these two are very numerous ancient manuscripts existing in different libraries, and whose authenticity is firmly established.

Let us, then, hear what is said of Ari Marson.

You must first remember that Huitramannaland is intimated, in “the account of Thorfinn,” to be situated in the same western ocean as, but down to the south of, Vinland. We shall see how far the accounts which will now be given agree with or corroborate this intimation. The account of Ari Marson is a short one. It is, however, as long as could be expected to be given concerning one individual in the *Landnamabok*.

“ULF † the Squinter, son of HOGNI the White, occupied the whole of *Reykianess*, (southwest promontory of Iceland,) between Thorskafiord and Hafrafell. He had a wife named BIORG, the daughter of Eyvind the East-countryman. They had a son named ATLI the RED, who married THORBIORG, sister of Steinolf the Humble. These had a son named MAR of *Holum*, who married THORKOTU, daughter of Hergil. They had a son named ARI, who was driven by a tempest to HUITRAMANLAND, (white man’s land,) which some call Irland it

---

\* A *facsimile* of the entire manuscript containing the account of Gudleif’s voyage, is given in the *Antiq. Am.*

† *Antiq. Am.* p. 210.

Mikla, (Great Ireland,) *which lies in the western ocean, near to Vinland the Good, west from Ireland,*” — by a number of days’ sail, which is uncertain,\* some error having crept into the original in these figures. “Ari was not permitted to depart thence, but was baptized there —”

Baptized! exclaimed the doctor. What! were there Christians there?

It is difficult, on account of the exceeding brevity of these particulars, to understand this passage. Whether he was baptized by the natives, or by some of those who, as we learn from what follows, subsequently touched upon the land, does not appear. It is possible that a crew of Christians may have been driven to this shore, and settled there. From what follows as to the information gathered from Thorfinn, Jarl of the Orkneys, it will be seen that there must have been occasional intercourse with these parts of America by the Northmen.

But how, asked the doctor, if he never returned, could they learn that he was baptized?

That the narrative proceeds to inform us. It continues: — “So RAFN the Limerick merchant first stated, who lived for a long time at Limerick in Ireland.” Rafn was kinsman to Ari Marson, and lived at the beginning or middle of the eleventh century. “So also THORKEL, the son of Geller, (grandson of Ari Marson,) says that certain Icelanders stated, who heard THORFINN, Jarl of the Orkneys,” † — also kinsman to Ari Marson, and born 1008, died 1064, — “relate that Ari had been seen and known in Huitramannaland, and that, although not permitted to depart thence, he was there held in great honor.

---

\* Antiq. Am. p. 447.

† The grandson of him before mentioned, p. 131, to have married Grelad.

“Ari had a wife named THORGERD, daughter of ALF of Dolum. Their sons were THORGILS, GUDLEIF, and ILLUGI; which is the family of Reykianess.” Then follows a passage which shows that Eirek the Red was connected with the family of this Ari Marson, and which it may not be amiss to repeat, as all these historical allusions afford corroboration of the authenticity of the different narratives. “JORUND was the son of Ulf the Squinter. He married THORBIORG KNARRARBRING. They had a daughter, THJODHILD, whom EIREK the RED married. They had a son, LEIF the LUCKY, of Greenland.” It is worthy of remark that the writer of this account was ARI the LEARNED, born 1067, and who flourished at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries, and who therefore lived within a century after Ari Marson’s departure from Ireland. He was immediately descended from Ari Marson, and would, of course, be anxious and careful to obtain the most accurate accounts of his ancestor. You will observe the situation of Huitramannaland as here stated;—“In the western ocean, near Vinland, and west of Ireland.” It must, of necessity, be that portion of the country now known as the midland or southern States of the Union.

There is just enough about the matter, in this passage, to excite curiosity, said the doctor, and little to satisfy it.

There I will grant you are right, said Mr. Norset. All that we can gather from the details which are given is, that the Northmen did frequently touch upon different parts \* of the more southern coasts of this continent, both

---

\* That they were *different parts* of the coast on which different navigators touched, appears evident from the account of the voyage of Gudleif Gudlaugson. Others must have touched on a more hospitable region, and such must have been the region to which Ari Marson was carried, else none could have returned to tell Thorfinn Jarl that Ari Marson had been seen.



accidentally and designedly. But we gain little definite information, such as we have in the case of Vinland.

What says the second document relating to Ari Marson?

It is extremely brief, being merely incidentally introduced in a geographical work. It runs thus:—

“To the south of habitable Greenland there are uninhabited and wild tracts, and enormous icebergs.” This must, of course, be Labrador, called by them *Helluland*. “The country of the Skrælings lies beyond these; Markland beyond this, and Vinland the Good beyond the last. Next to this, and something-beyond it, lies Albania, that is, Huitramannaland, whither, formerly, vessels came from Ireland. There several *Irishmen* AND *Icelanders* saw and recognized Ari, the son of Mar and Kotlu, of Reykianess, concerning whom nothing had been heard for a long time, and who had been made their chief by the inhabitants of the land.”

This is vague enough, remarked the doctor.

Rather vague, in truth, answered Mr. Norset. All that we definitely learn from it is, that *the Northmen were well aware of the fact*,—which they learned from the explorations of Thorvald Eirekson, which you will recall; from the reports heard by Thorfinn; and from the voyages of some of their countrymen to Huitramannaland, as it was called,—that *Helluland, Markland, Vinland, and Huitramannaland, were all parts of one vast continent in the western hemisphere*. One thing I cannot forbear to remark, doctor,—that the very vagueness and incompleteness of all these passages is a thorough proof of their authenticity. There would have been no such vagueness in a fable or a fabrication. Here is strongly impressed the consciousness of truth and simple fact. There is no vagueness nor uncertainty as to the

fact of these parts and their situation being known ; but we are left in darkness as to all details of expeditions thither. It would have been easy to fabricate these. As it is, we have only *allusions*, which render it certain that such expeditions were made ; the only details which we have being those, which I will presently read, of an accidental but remarkable discovery of one who had long been considered lost, upon those shores. The situation of Huitramannaland is identified, in each extract, beyond the possibility of dispute, with the same region, the midland or southern States. The different accounts, though differing in the *mode* of their description, all agree in their *actual* description.

Upon my word, said the doctor, after a silence of a few moments, I do n't like this indefiniteness at all. I very much question — the doctor paused in the middle of his sentence, as if suddenly recollecting himself. Mr. Norset immediately replied : —

I do n't like the indefiniteness either, doctor, because I should like to know as much as possible about these interesting discoveries ; but I know that we cannot, in a true history, always get exactly what we want. Had this been a fabrication, you know, doctor, it would have been easy enough to have been just as precise about Huitramannaland as about Vinland. This indefiniteness is, under the circumstances, as I have already said, a strong internal evidence of authenticity. There is sufficient definiteness to show that the Northmen were acquainted with, and made expeditions to, the southern portion of these States, though details of expeditions thither are wanting. We must take what we have got, and make the best of it. I told you, before we began, that we should not get any thing so satisfactory here as in the case of Vinland. Perhaps, however, we shall find something more satisfactory when we come to the history of Biorn Asbrandson.

Pray, proceed with his history, then.

It is considerably longer than that of Ari Marson. I told you that there was something which might be called romantic about it; so do n't be surprised at the details. There are no supernatural visitants, however.

“BORK the Fat,\* and THORDIS, daughter of SUR, had a daughter named THURID, who married THORBIORN the Fat, living on the estate of Froda. Thorbiorn had before been married to THURID, daughter of ASBRAND of *Kamb* in *Breidavik*,† and sister of BIORN BREIDVIKINGAKAPPI, presently to be more particularly mentioned, and of ARNBIORN the HARDY. The sons of Thorbiorn and Thurid were KETIL the CHAMPION, GUNNLAUG and HALLSTEIN.

“Something must be related of Snorri Godi.‡ He undertook the process for the death of Thorbiorn his kinsman. He also obliged his sister Thurid to remove to his own house at Helgafell; for it was rumored that Biorn Asbrandson paid close attentions to her.

“There was a man named THORODD, of Medalfells-

\* Antiq. Am. p. 216:

† All the localities thus mentioned, together with most others which will be mentioned in this narrative, are situated on the ness on the western coast of Iceland, between Breidafjord and Faxafjord.

‡ The principal chieftains among the ancient Icelanders fulfilled at the same time the office of priests and duties of civil rulers. The title *Godi*, derived from the same word which is applied to designate the deity, was given to those who thus discharged both offices, on account of their supposed connection with, or derived authority from, that deity. This was in the days of paganism. Snorri (Thorgrimsson) Godi lived anterior to, as well as after, the introduction of Christianity into Iceland. He occupies a remarkably conspicuous station in the history of the times, and is the same person mentioned by Henderson, (see *American* edition, p. 181, note,) and by Wheaton, (p. 42,) &c.

strond, a worthy man and a good merchant. He owned a merchant ship, in which he sailed to foreign parts. Thorodd had sailed to the west, to Dublin," — here you see, doctor, we have Ireland again spoken of as "*the west*," by an Icelander, — "to transact business. At that time SIGURD HLODVEROSON, Jarl of the Orkneys,\* had made an expedition towards the west, to the Hebrides and to Man, and had imposed a tribute on the inhabited part of Man. Having concluded peace, he left men to collect the tribute; the Jarl himself returned to the Orkneys.

"Those who were left to collect the tribute, having got all ready, set sail with a southwest wind. But when they had sailed some time, the wind shifted to the southeast and east, and a violent tempest arose which drove them to the northward as far as Ireland, and there their ship was wrecked on an uninhabited and barren island. Just as they reached the island, Thorodd the Icelander, sailing from Dublin, passed. The shipwrecked crew implored aid. Thorodd, having put out a boat, himself went to them. When he reached them, the officers of Sigurd promised him money if he would carry them home to the Orkneys. When he told them that he could not possibly do so, having already made all arrangements for returning to Iceland, they more urgently entreated him, thinking that neither their money nor liberties would be safe if they went either to Ireland or the Hebrides, which they had so recently entered with a hostile army.

"At length Thorodd agreed to sell the long-boat of his

---

\* This Sigurd Jarl died in 1013. He was son of Thorfinn Jarl and Grelad, mentioned, ante, p. 131. The date is worthy to be remembered. This expedition took place many years before his death.

ship to them for a large sum. In this they reached the Orkneys, and Thorodd sailed to Iceland without a boat. Having reached the southern shores of the island, he directed his course along the coast to the westward, and entered Breidafjord, where he came to harbor at Dogurdar-ness.

“The same autumn he went to Helgafell, to spend the winter with Snorri Godi; and from that time he was called THORODD the TRIBUTE-TAKER. This happened a little after the murder of Thorbiorn the Fat.

“During the same winter, Thurid, sister of Snorri Godi, who had been the wife of Thorbiorn the Fat, was at Helgafell. Thorodd made proposals of marriage to Snorri Godi, respecting Thurid. Being wealthy, and known by Snorri to be of good standing, and that he would be likely to be useful to him, he agreed to his proposals. So their marriage was celebrated during the same winter at Snorri’s house at Helgafell.

“In the following spring, Thorodd established himself at Froda, and was esteemed a worthy man.

“But, when Thurid went to Froda, Biorn Asbrandson paid her frequent visits. Thorodd endeavored to put a stop to his visits, but in vain.

“At that time, THORER WOODEN-CLOG lived at Arnarhol. His sons ORN and VAL were grown up, and youths of great promise. These men greatly blamed Thorodd for suffering himself to be so much insulted by Biorn, and offered him their assistance, if he wished to put a stop to his visits.

“It happened one time, when Biorn was at Froda, that he sat talking with Thurid. It was always Thorodd’s habit, when Biorn was there, to sit in the house. He was now nowhere to be seen. Then said Thurid,—‘Look to it, Biorn; for I have an idea Thorodd intends to put a

stop to your visits here; I believe that he has secured the road, and that he designs to attack you and overpower you with numbers.' 'Perhaps it may be so,' answered Biorn, and he sang these verses:—

O goddess,\* how we both were blest,  
 If yonder glorious orb of day  
 His course, 'twixt heaven and ocean dark,  
 Should, for one little hour, delay.  
 Delay avails not. Thou, my love,  
 The sorrow bringing news dost tell,  
 That we this evening here must bid  
 Our mournful, long, and last farewell.

"Biorn then took his arms and went on his way homeward. As he was mounting the hill Digramul, five men leaped out upon him from ambush. These were Thorodd and two of his men, and the sons of Thorer Wooden-clog. They attacked Biorn, but he defended himself well and bravely.

"The sons of Thorer pressed him hard, and even wounded him, but he slew them both. Thorodd then fled with his men, though he himself had only a slight wound, neither of them any. Biorn proceeded onwards, till he reached home. He entered the hall. His mother desired a maid to place food before him. When the maid came into the room with a light, and saw Biorn wounded, she went and told Asbrand, his father, that Biorn had returned home covered with blood. Asbrand entered the room, and asked what was the cause of his wounds. 'Have you and Thorodd had a fight?' he inquired. Biorn told him that such had been the case. Asbrand asked what had been the result. Biorn answered in these verses:—

---

\* *Jörd*, the wife of *Odin*.

Not with the like success can he  
 A valiant warrior's rage arouse,  
 (For Thorer's sons I both have slain  
 Great sorrow to their father's house) \*  
 As when his idle hours he spends  
 In dalliance with a woman fair;  
 Or when, though weak in warlike deeds,  
 A purchased tribute † he may bear.

“Asbrand bound up his son's wounds, and he soon regained his strength. Thorodd went to Snorri Godi to consult with him about instituting a process against Biorn, on account of the slaughter of the sons of Thorer. This process was maintained in the court of Thorsnesthing. It was adjudged that Asbrand, who had become bound for his son, should pay the usual fines. Biorn was exiled for three years, and left Iceland the same summer. During that same summer a son was born to Thurid, who was called KIARTAN, and was brought up at Froda.

“Biorn went to Denmark, and thence to JOMSBORG, (near the mouth of the Oder, on the coast of Pomerania in Prussia.) At that time PALNATOKI was captain of the knights of Jomsborg. Biorn was admitted into the company, and attained the name of KAPPI (*Champion.*)”

May I ask, interrupted Mr. Cassall, who the knights of Jomsborg were ?

They were a famous band of knights, organized in the tenth century, by PALNATOKI, a powerful chieftain of the north, into a military company under remarkably strict regulations. They became of such note that men of the highest rank and station sought admission to the company.

---

\* These two lines occur parenthetically in the original, as here translated.

† In allusion to the affair whence Thorodd acquired the name of *Tribute-Taker.*

The title of *champion* was given only to those among them most distinguished for bravery and prowess.

“He was at Jomsborg when Styrbiorn the Hardy attacked it. He went into Sweden when the knights of Jomsborg aided Styrbiorn. He was in the battle of Fyrisvall, in which Styrbiorn was killed; and thence he escaped with the other knights of Jomsborg. As long as Palnatoki lived \* Biorn lived with him, and was esteemed a man of extraordinary courage.”

We have then a break in the narrative, which subsequently proceeds:—

“In the same summer, (about 996,) the brothers Biorn and Arnbiorn returned to Iceland. Biorn was always afterwards called BREIDVIKINGAKAPPI, (champion of Breidavik.) Arnbiorn, who had acquired great wealth abroad, bought, the same summer, the Bakk estate in Raunhafn.† He lived there with little ostentation, but was active and vigilant. Biorn, his brother, lived in great splendor and luxury; for, during his absence, he had adopted the manners of courtiers and nobles. He greatly exceeded Arnbiorn in personal qualities, and was nothing inferior to him in activity. He was also far more skilled than his brother in martial exercises, for he had improved himself much in these while abroad.

“During this same summer, soon after the return of Biorn, a general meeting was held near Haugabrekk, on the bay of Froda. All the merchants rode thither, clad in colored garments, and there was a great assemblage. Thurid of Froda was there, with whom Biorn immediately entered into conversation; and no one censured them for talking long together, for it had been several years ‡

\* Palnatoki died about 993, or 994.

† On the same *ness* as before mentioned.

‡ It must have been at least ten or twelve, or more, years since Biorn quitted Iceland, since it is mentioned in the narrative that



since they had met. Kjartan, the son of Thurid, was present at this assembly, and exhibited his manly nature.

“Biorn afterwards returned to Kamb, and took the estate into his own hands; for his father was then dead. In the following winter he determined to make a visit across the hills to Thurid. Although Thorodd disliked this, yet he did not know how to prevent it, since he had before been worsted by Biorn; and the latter was now much stronger and more skilled in arms than before. He therefore bribed Thorgrim Galdrakinn, (a witch,) by a large sum, to raise a snow-storm against Biorn as he crossed the hills.

“Biorn went from home one day to Froda. As he was returning in the evening the sky grew dark and a snow-storm commenced. As he ascended the hills the cold became intense, and the snow fell so thickly that he could not see his way. Presently the violence of the storm increased so much that he could hardly walk. His garments, already soaked through, froze round his body, and he wandered he knew not whither. In the course of the night he reached a cave, which he entered, and in this cold chamber he passed the night. Then he sang the following verses,” — to understand which, you must know that it was the custom, in Iceland, in these ancient times, and indeed still is so,\* for the females of

---

Thurid had a son born the same summer that Biorn left; and it is incidentally mentioned again, in this place, that this son, then a youth, was present at this meeting. These facts are important as internal evidence of the truth of the narrative, as will presently be seen. There are some details given in the original which are omitted here. They do not affect the main point of the narrative, but refer entirely to Kjartan. See *Antiq. Am.* p. 230.

\* The singular but ancient customs still prevailing in Iceland, in this respect, are alluded to by Henderson. (See *American edition*,

the family to provide warm garments for travellers' oppressed by fatigue or tempest; and to discharge several minor offices conducive to their comfort: —

“ O gentle maid, whose wonted care  
 Brings ease to traveller way-worn,  
 Ill would'st thou think thy task performed  
 This night, if me, thus all forlorn,  
 Thine eyes could see, by tempest dark,  
 And raging wind, now driven here,  
 From pelting storm escape to find  
 In icy walls of cavern drear.

“ Again he sang: —

“ Far from my native land, my course,  
 Extending o'er the ocean tide,  
 Has stretched; — thus exiled for the love  
 Of one, by evil fate denied.  
 Oft has my hand, mid battles dire,  
 In deeds of arms its strength displayed;  
 No rest shall e'er by me be found,  
 In frozen cave now, weary, laid.

“ Biorn remained in the cavern three whole days before the storm abated. On the fourth day he returned home, worn out by fatigue.

“ When his servants inquired where he had been during the storm, he answered, —

“ Well known to fame are all my deeds  
 When I did join brave Styrbiorn's host;  
 When Eirek slew our army's pride,  
 And Styrbiorn life and fortune lost.  
 But, wandering o'er the mountain range,  
 No martial skill availed me now;  
 My homeward path the witch concealed  
 By darkened sky and drifted snow.

“ Biorn passed the remainder of the winter at home.

---

p. 69.) Their singularity forcibly attracted the attention of that traveller.

“One summer, Thorodd the Tribute-taker invited Snorri Godi, his kinsman, to a feast at his house at Froda. Snorri went there, with twenty men. In the course of the banquet, Thorodd told Snorri how much he was injured and insulted by Biörn Asbrandson, who still came to see his wife Thurid, the sister of Snorri Godi; adding, that it behoved Snorri to destroy the evil. Snorri, after passing some days with Thorodd, went home, with many presents from Thorodd. Snorri Godi rode over the hills, and spread a report that he was going down to his ship in the Bay of Raunhafn. This was in summer, about the time of haymaking.

“When he had gone south as far as the Kambian hills, Snorri said, — ‘Let us ride back now, from the hills to Kamb: I wish to inform you,’ he added, ‘that I have determined to attack Biorn and destroy him. I am unwilling, however, to attack him in his house, for it is a strong one, and Biorn is stout and valiant, while our number is small. Even those who, with greater numbers, have attacked brave men in their houses, have fared badly: an example of which you know in the case of Geir Godi, and Gissur the White; who, when with eighty men they attacked Gunnar of Hlidarend alone, in his house, many were wounded and many killed, and they would have been compelled to give up the attack, if Geir Godi had not learned that Gunnar was short of arrows. Therefore,’ said he, ‘as we may now expect to find Biorn out of doors, it being the time of haymaking, I appoint you, kinsman Mar, to give him the first wound; but observe that he is no man for child’s play, and you must expect a contest with a hungry wolf, unless your first wound shall be his death blow.’

“As they rode towards his farm, from the hills, they saw Biorn in the fields. He was making a dray, and no

one was near him. He had no arms, except a small axe and a knife which he held in his hand, and with which he was fashioning the dray: the blade of the knife was about a span long.

“ Biorn saw Snorri Godi and his men riding down from the hills, and recognized them. Snorri Godi had on a blue cloak, and rode first. A sudden thought seized Biorn, that he should take his knife and go to meet them as quickly as he could; and, as soon as he reached them, should seize the sleeve of Snorri with one hand, and should hold the knife in the other, so that he might be able to strike Snorri to the heart, if he saw that it was necessary to his own safety.

“ Going therefore to meet them, Biorn bade them hail, and Snorri Godi returned his salutation. The hands of Mar fell, for he saw that, if he attacked Biorn, the latter would immediately kill Snorri. Then Biorn, walking along with Snorri Godi and his companions, asked what news there was—keeping his hands as at first. Then said he,— ‘ I will not pretend to conceal, neighbor Snorri, that my present appearance and attitude seems threatening you;— which might indeed appear blamable, were it not that I have understood that you have come here with hostile intentions. But now I desire that, if you have any business to transact with me, you will pursue a different course to that which you have intended, and that you will transact it openly. If you have none, swear peace, which, if you will do, I will return to my occupation; for I do not wish to be led here like a fool.’ ‘ Our meeting has so fallen out,’ answered Snorri, ‘ that we shall, this time, separate as much in peace as we were before. I wish, however, to obtain a promise from you, that you will abstain from visiting Thurid; for, if you will persist in this, there never can be any sincere friendship between

us.' Biorn answered,— 'This will I promise; and I will observe it; but I know not how I shall be able to observe it, while I and Thurid live in the same land.' 'There is nothing so important detaining you here,' answered Snorri, 'as to prevent your going to some other country.' 'That is true,' said Biorn, 'and so let it be; let our interview close with this promise, — that neither you nor Thorodd shall have cause to take any umbrage from my visits to Thurid in time to come.'

"They parted. Snorri Godi rode down to his ship, and then went home to Helgafell. The next day, Biorn rode down to Hraunhafn, and engaged his passage in a ship for the same summer. When all was ready they set sail, with a *northeast wind*," — observe the wind, doctor, — "which wind prevailed during a great part of that summer. Of the fate of that ship nothing was for a long time heard." And that is the end of this history.

That the end! said the doctor, — what do you mean, sir? we have not got a step the forwarder, or heard the slightest mention made of Huitramannaland.

Surely, doctor, such an interesting narrative of inauspicious love should have driven from your mind all thoughts of Huitramannaland. Who would have expected to hear you make such a remark?

I do n't care a farthing for any body's love, said the doctor, testily. Do you mean to say, sir, that you have been "leading me like a fool," as Biorn was led, all this time? What, in the name of goodness, has this story to do with Huitramannaland? I've been waiting patiently in the expectation of hearing that country mentioned every moment.

Well, doctor, patience is a great virtue, and there must be much satisfaction, therefore, in the consciousness

of its exercise. Seriously, this story has a good deal to do with Huitramannaland.

Pray, inform me in what way.

Why, you know it says, at the end, that "of the fate of that ship nothing was heard for a long time." Now don't you think it very likely that Biorn was carried in that ship to Huitramannaland?

Carried to Huitramannaland! think it likely! pough, pough, pough, exclaimed the doctor, with evident signs of vexation; just as likely to have been carried to the moon. A likely story, indeed!

Which, doctor; the moon story, or the Huitramannaland story?

The doctor gave no answer, except by a contemptuous curl of the lip.

Upon my word, doctor, I thought that, as you are, as we all know, exceedingly apt at jumping to conclusions, — as witness your eagerness many times during our discussion of this matter, — you would certainly come to the immediate conclusion that it was to Huitramannaland that Biorn Asbrandson was carried; and that this was the reason nothing was heard of him for so long a time.

The doctor vouchsafed, however, no reply, but gave his lip a higher curl.

Seriously and soberly, doctor: you remember that I stated, at first, that there were two documents relating to Biorn Asbrandson, as there were two relating to Ari Marson. It is necessary that the first of these, the one we have just perused, should be given, in order properly to understand the second, — the one which, if you please, we will now take.

The doctor seemed to grow somewhat pacified under these remarks, and observed, —

If this second document will really throw some light

upon Huitramannaland, let us have it ; but not if it is to leave us as much in the dark as this first one has done.

Allow me to ask, interposed Mr. Cassall, what was the date of Biorn Asbrandson's departure from Iceland ?

We learn, from a comparison of the different facts mentioned therein, many of which, — such as the battle of Fyrisvall, the death of Palnatoki, &c. — are well-known and authentic historical events, that it must have been about the year 998 that Biorn finally left Iceland.

I must say, added Mr. Cassall, that he was badly used : I do not mean in being required not to visit Thurid : — I mean in his marriage with her being prevented by Snorri Godi, while Thorodd was immediately accepted and forced upon her for a husband, merely because he was wealthy, though without possessing half so much excellence as Biorn in the qualities either of body or mind ; — for Biorn must have been somewhat refined, to have been so apt and not inelegant a poet. All the evil and annoyance which followed to Thorodd and Snorri were deserved by them.

I agree with you, said Mr. Norsset ; but you see that then, as well as now, wealth was thought, by some, a thing much more to be considered in the marriage of a ward or relative than worth or sincere affection. Still, Biorn's conduct, after the marriage of Thurid had taken place, however iniquitously, is not to be justified.

True, true, answered Mr. Cassall.

And now, said the doctor, let us proceed with the second document relating to Biorn Asbrandson, and see if it throws any light upon the history of Huitramannaland.

You shall have it, doctor, immediately ; and I hope that it may afford you some satisfaction, though again I remind you that it will probably more excite than gratify your curiosity. It does, however, bear directly upon the

subject. It contains an account of a voyage made by one GUDLEIF GUDLAUGSON. It is as follows : —

“ There was a man named GUDLEIF, the son of GUDLAUG the WEALTHY, of *Straumfiord*, (western coast of Iceland,) and from whom the *Sturlungar*, (family of Sturla, conspicuous in the annals of Iceland, and among whom the celebrated Snorri Sturluson, author of the *Heimskringla*, is most renowned,) are descended. Gudleif was an accomplished merchant. He had a merchant ship, and THOROLF EYRA-LOPTSON another, when they fought with GYRD, son of SIGVALD Jarl. Gyrd lost an eye in that encounter.

“ It happened, towards the close of the reign of king Olaf the Saint,\* that Gudleif made a trading voyage to the west country,† — to Dublin. On his return to Iceland, sailing from the western part of Ireland, (probably Limerick,) he fell in with *northeast* and *east* winds, and was driven far into the ocean towards the southwest and west,” — mark the direction, doctor, — “ so that no land was seen, the summer being now far spent. Many prayers were offered by Gudleif and his men, that they might escape their perils; and at length they saw land. It was of great extent, and they knew not what land it was.

“ They took counsel and determined to make for land, judging it very unadvisable to struggle any longer with the perils of the ocean. They found at length a com-

\* Olaf II, king of Norway, — commonly called *Saint Olaf*, from his zeal in the propagation of Christianity, in which he imitated Olaf Tryggvason, already mentioned, (p. 89,) — was chosen king in 1015, and was killed in battle by *Knud Svendson*, commonly called *Canute the Great*, A. D. 1030. This date, as will be subsequently seen, is important.

† It has been already seen that Ireland was always spoken of by the Icelanders and other Northmen as “ *the west*.” See p. 59, &c.



modious harbor. Soon after they had gone ashore, several men came down towards them. They knew none of these natives, however, but thought their language resembled the Irish.\* In a short time such a number of men gathered round them as amounted to many hundreds. These, having attacked them, bound them all with fetters, and drove them into the country. They were then brought before an assembly, and a discussion was held as to what should be done with them. They gathered that some were for slaying them, others for distributing them among the different villages and making slaves of them.

“Whilst the debate was going on, they saw a large body of men riding towards them, with a banner elevated in the midst, whence they concluded that some one in authority was among the company. When the company drew nearer, they saw a man riding under the banner, tall and of military deportment, aged and gray-headed. All present treated this man with the greatest deference and honor.

“Gudleif and his men presently perceived that their case was referred to the decision of this man. He commanded that Gudleif and his men should be brought before him, which being done, he addressed them in the *Norse* tongue, and asked them what countrymen they were? They replied that the greater number of them were Icelanders. He asked which of them were Icelanders? Gudleif said that he was an Icelander, and saluted the old man re-

---

\* Little solid ground of argument can, however, be taken on the score of their thinking the language of these natives resembled somewhat the Irish. The very mode of expression shows that the resemblance was only slight, probably more fancied than real; and they do not appear to have understood any of the *spoken* language in the subsequent councils of the natives.

spectfully. The old man returned his salutation courteously, and asked from what part of Iceland he came? Gudleif stated that he came from the district called Borgarfjord (west coast of Iceland, and near adjoining Breidafjord, in which were situated Froda, Kamb, and Helgafell.) He asked who lived in Borgarfjord? to which Gudleif replied in detail. The old man then inquired particularly concerning all the principal men in Borgarfjord and Breidafjord; and, of these, he inquired with a special interest into every particular relating to Snorri Godi, and Thurid of Froda, his sister.

“Meantime, the natives grew impatient that some decision should be come to, as to the fate of the strangers. Then the venerable old man left Gudleif and his companions, and, taking with him twelve of the natives, talked with them apart for a long time. At length he returned. Addressing Gudleif and his companions, he said, — ‘We have had some discussion concerning you, and the natives have left the matter to my decision. I will now, therefore, permit you to depart whithersoever you desire; and, although the summer is now far advanced, yet I recommend you to depart immediately; for these people are faithless and difficult to deal with, and they think that they have now been deprived of their just right.’

“Then Gudleif inquired, — ‘Who shall we report, if we ever reach our native land again, to have done us this great favor?’ ‘That I will not tell you,’ answered he, ‘for I am unwilling that any of my relations and friends should come hither.’” You must let me pause here, to remark that the expressions thus made use of are worthy of attention, since they show that the speaker, — whom you must necessarily have already perceived to have been a Northman himself, — considered that it

would not only be very probable, but most likely, that his kindred would make the voyage to those coasts, when they heard of him. He must have spoken with the knowledge that expeditions to coasts not far distant had been made already. To proceed:—“‘I am unwilling that any of my kindred or friends should come hither, and meet with such a fate as you would have done, had I not saved you. Age creeps upon me now so fast, that I may almost expect each day to be my last. Although I may yet live a little longer, there are, in this land, men of greater power than myself, though now at some distance from this place, and these would not grant peace or safety to any foreigners.’

“Then that old man himself superintended the fitting out of their ship, and remained in the neighborhood until a fair wind sprung up, so that they might sail.

“Before their departure, he pulled a golden ring from off his finger, and gave it to Gudleif, saying,—‘If fortune grant that you reach Iceland, give this ring to Thurid of Froda.’ Gudleif inquired,—‘Who shall I say was the sender of this precious gift?’ He answered,—‘Say that he sent it, who loved the lady of Froda, (that is, Thurid,) better than her brother, the Godi of Helgafell. And if any one shall thence infer that he knows from whom this gift was sent, you must repeat my words, that I forbid that any one should seek me, for the expedition will betide the adventurer ill, unless others shall meet with the same fortune as yourselves. This country is extensive, but has few good harbors; and dangers threaten strangers on all sides from the inhabitants, unless it shall chance to happen to others as to yourselves.’

“Then Gudleif and his companions put out to sea. They reached Ireland the same autumn, and passed the winter in Dublin. In the following spring they sailed

to Iceland, and Gudleif delivered the ring. It was generally thought that there could be no doubt the man they had seen was **BIORN BREIDVIKINGAKAPPI**. Nothing else was ever heard of him but that which has been thus narrated."

And is that all? asked the doctor.

That is the conclusion of the whole matter, answered Mr. Norset.

A most lame and impotent conclusion, quoth the doctor, in a tone of dissatisfaction.

Doctor, methinks you are a man hard to please. What would you have?

Why, I would have something definite about Huitramannaland.

Well, said Mr. Norset, surely you find something definite about Huitramannaland in these accounts. You will remember that Biorn Asbrandson left Iceland with a northeast wind, the same wind prevailing during the whole summer. He was driven, then, to the southwest. Gudleif Gudlaugson left the western coast of Ireland, and was driven by northeast and east winds, that is, of course, northeast by east, till he came to land, where he found Biorn Asbrandson. Now take the map, and draw a line northeast to southwest from Iceland, and another northeast by east to southwest by west from the west of Ireland, and see where they would intersect.

They would intersect about Carolina and Georgia, answered the doctor.

That, then, must have been the land on which Gudleif Gudlaugson landed, and where he found Biorn Asbrandson. There can be no hesitation about the matter.

Stay a moment, said the doctor, looking round him with a very self-complacent air; this may be very true, according to these accounts; but I want some evidence of

the authenticity of these accounts. You have given us none of your *internal evidence*, or incidental coincidences, in this matter.

I might have done so, doctor, very fully, had I thought it worth while, but I considered that it would only have been wearisome. I have already gone so deeply into the internal evidence of the other narratives, that I did not consider it necessary here.

Let us have one or two points of internal evidence exhibited, at any rate, said the doctor, in order that we may see whether this is not merely a way of escaping from a dilemma.

Certainly, if you wish it. I will give you a few strong ones. We will take two points which are, at the same time, the strongest and the *most important*, namely, geographical allusions, and allusions to dates. It is stated, quite incidentally, in the narrative, that "*the country is extensive, but has few good harbors.*" Now we all know the country is pretty extensive. As to the "few good harbors," I will bring you an authority which you will not despise, — one which I have before quoted with reference to this same southern and eastern coast, and which is the more valuable, as coming from one strongly prejudiced against the Northmen. In the same account of Verrazzani's expedition that I quoted before, we read the following: — "*But no convenient harbor was found, though the search extended fifty leagues to the south*"\* (of Wilmington, North Carolina.) It would be impossible to find a more striking case of coincidence than this, — so exceedingly incidentally, yet naturally, mentioned in the speech of Biorn Asbrandson, and yet agreeing so precisely with the fact, as described

---

\* *Bancroft's Hist. U. S.* fourth ed. (1838,) vol. i. p. 16.

by the French navigator *in the sixteenth century*, and recorded by one who would be most unwilling knowingly to afford any means of corroboration of the truth of the expeditions and discoveries of the Northmen. If ever there was internal evidence of truth, you have it here. What say you, doctor? Does not this *identify the locality*, as well as prove the truth of the narrative?

The doctor looked in no slight degree surprised at this point of internal evidence. He sought to evade expressing the conviction which it necessarily carried, by inquiring,—

What was the point about *dates* to which you alluded?

In the account of Biorn Asbrandson, it is stated that he joined the knights of Jomsborg, and that he was present in the battle of Fyrisvall. The time of Gudleif Gudlaugson's voyage, which is recorded in a totally distinct document, is stated to have been in the latter part of the reign of Olaf the Saint, king of Norway. It is stated, too, that when Gudleif saw Biorn Asbrandson, the latter was aged and gray-headed. Again, Snorri Godi is brought into the narrative, and it would appear, from the same narrative, that he was alive when Gudleif last left Iceland before seeing Biorn. Sigurd, Jarl of the Orkneys, and his expedition to Man, are also introduced. Now it is self-evident that it is morally impossible all these matters of fact and date could have been found to accord, if these narratives had been a fabrication. All the facts mentioned, *with the exception*, as we will assume for your satisfaction in the argument, of Biorn's own existence and deeds, are historical and well-known facts, the dates of which are also known. The time of the birth and death of Snorri Godi, (964—1031,) and of the death of Sigurd Jarl, (1013,) are also known. We might have expected to find some blunder, in the con-

sistency of all that is related of Biorn Asbrandson with the dates of the historical events thus casually mentioned; but no: — we find it mentioned that he was, in the prime of his life, at Jomsborg; that he left Jomsborg on the death of Palnatoki,\* having remained there some years; † and returned to Iceland in 996. He must necessarily, therefore, have been arrived at middle age when he thus returned to Iceland. Three years afterwards he left Iceland, and was never heard of again, until a period which we are happily able to fix by the merely incidental mention that Gudleif left Iceland, on his voyage to Ireland, “in the latter part of the reign of king Olaf the Saint.” This must necessarily have been about 1028 or 1030. ‡ Gudleif found Biorn, it is also incidentally stated, *old and gray-headed*. This, the account being true, Biorn would necessarily be, since it was nearly or quite thirty years since he had left Iceland, being then in his full middle age. Thus we see that there is a remarkable agreement between the facts stated with respect to Biorn, and those known facts to which we can refer for comparison. We find the two agree precisely, though merely incidentally brought together, and that, too, in two documents perfectly distinct in origin and authors. It is morally impossible that this should have been the case in a fabrication. What say you, doctor?

O! well, well! it's all very fine. But we are not told that this is Huitramannaland in which Biorn was seen; so that I do n't see that you get much the forwarder after all.

We are not expressly told this, doctor, it is true; and here is another proof of the authenticity and truth of the

\* See note, ante, p. 268.

† See note, ante, p. 268.

‡ See note, ante, p. 276.

narratives. Had they been fabricated, we should not have been left to examine, and search out closely for the means of determining, what land it was, or whether or not it was Huitramannaland. It would all have been straight-forward and clear enough, depend upon it. It can, however, easily be shown that this must have been part \* of, or adjoining to, what was known to the Icelandic geographers by the name of Huitramannaland. In all the allusions which we have had to Huitramannaland, geographical and otherwise, — and they have been numerous, and many more might have been quoted, — we have seen its situation laid down as *beyond Vinland, though on the same continent and continuous coast, in the western ocean, many days' sail west of Ireland.*

---

\* The expression "part of, or adjoining to, what was known," &c. is employed here by the author advisedly. He must differ from the learned editor of the *Antiq. Am.* in considering the coast to which Ari Marson was driven and that touched by Gudleif as the same. See reason given in note to p. 260, ante. The author is inclined to the belief that *Huitramannaland* lay nearer to Vinland, — including, perhaps, the shores of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, — while the land visited by Gudleif *adjoined* Huitramannaland, and included South Carolina, Georgia, and perhaps Florida. All the geographical allusions, — which, though brief, are peculiarly designative and important, — in all the accounts of these parts, seem to favor this conclusion. Huitramannaland lay "*beyond Vinland,*" — but still "*near to Vinland,*" — in the western ocean, and west of Ireland by many days' sail. This completely identifies the locality just designated. The land visited by Gudleif is as clearly and exactly designated by the accounts given of the course of the two vessels (of Biorn Asbrandson, and of Gudleif Gudlaugson) to it, and remarkably so also by the casual mention of there being few good harbors. The author conceives it impossible that there can be any doubt, in any candid mind, about the facts of these shores being thus visited. The evidence is at least as strong as that which proves that Colon ever visited St. Domingo. It would appear that Thorvald's western and southern exploring party reach-



This all sounds very plausible, said the doctor; but I should like to know something more about the matter. We have no evidence to show that there ever were any white men inhabiting the land which you pretend to be Huitramannaland, or White man's land.

I agree with you, doctor, in saying I should like to know more about the matter. But you are decidedly wrong in imagining, as you seem to do, that there were no grounds for the term "*White man's land.*" We do not *know* the origin of the term. It might have arisen from various different circumstances: the natives taken by Thorfinn expressly told him that the natives wore *white garments*. This circumstance may have originated the name.\* It might have been so called simply because

---

ed as far as Carolina. The ancient Icelandic geographers were well aware that the whole coasts were continuous, and also well aware of their vast extent, as has been already, and will, in note A, at the end of the volume, be more fully, shown. It appears to the author, also, that the country alluded to by the natives taken by Thorfinn, and *misunderstood* by him to be Huitramannaland, was, as before stated, p. 253, Mexico, and that the Mexican power probably extended to these southern coasts touched by Gudleif. The state of civilization apparent there, and the use of banners, seem to correspond; and Biorn alludes to the *more powerful* chiefs *at a distance*, — that is, far in the interior, near the seat of Mexican power in the time of the Spaniards. This last point, however, is obviously not so clear as the former, as to the *locality* of Huitramannaland and *Biorn's land*, (as it may be termed.)

\* It would originate it in this way: — Thorfinn would know of the explorations of Thorvald. He would know, therefore, that the coast extended far south. Hearing the description of these people, he would designate their land *Huitramannaland*. The land would thence go by that name, simply as *distinctive* from other parts, Vinland, &c. and that name would be commonly applied to it before the time of the committal to writing of the account of Thorfinn. Let it be observed that this is only offered as an explanation of the mode in which the name *may* have originated, not as a theory of the mode in which it *did* originate.

white men, Northmen or Irish, touched upon it; or, lastly, it is possible that a crew of white men might have been wrecked there, and remained there, and thence the name arisen. The last supposition seems to be supported, indeed, by the allusions to the occasional voyages hither, and by other evidence.

By what other evidence? asked the doctor, with an expression of considerable surprise.

There are, or were, two very remarkable and ancient traditions existing among the Shawanoese Indians,\* who formerly inhabited Florida, near adjoining the region of which we have been speaking, but who, eighty-five years ago, (that is, about 1754,) went westward into Ohio, which seem to bear directly upon the present subject. The first of these is, that their ancestors came from a land across the ocean,† which, of course, had they been Irish or Northmen, they must have done. The second is, that Florida was formerly inhabited by white men ‡ who made use of iron instruments. Black-Hoof, a very old Indian of this tribe, who was born in Florida, remembered (in 1819) that he, as a boy, used to bathe in the sea, and that he often, when a boy, heard his parents relate that, in their time, pieces of wood were sometimes found, cut

\* *Archæologia Americana*, i. pp. 273, 276.

† It is proper to observe, however, that this tradition does not carry nearly so much force as that mentioned in relation to the neighborhood of Assonet, (ante, p. 185,) inasmuch as that we know the natives did formerly, as well as now, employ canoes, and might, without any great improbability, have been carried to Florida from some of the West India isles.

‡ Whoever has seen Mr. Catlin's valuable Indian gallery, and heard his description of the Mandans, must know that there exist, even at the present day, tribes among the natives, nearly approaching to white, many individuals being quite fair. The origin of the Mandans is involved in mystery, and they are now extinct. Mr. Catlin has secured all that is known concerning them.

with iron axes.\* What think you of these traditions, doctor ?

The doctor hesitated. He appeared not a little surprised to hear the traditions, and yet not fully satisfied.

Well, said he at length, they are singular, certainly.

Is that all you think about them, doctor ?

I don't know, said he, doubtingly. I want to know something more about the matter before I give any opinion.

I'll tell you what, doctor ; it seems to me that you and I come, after all, to pretty much the same conclusion, in one respect ; namely, that we should like to know something more definite about the ancient inhabitants of these regions. But I will hardly, doctor, pay you so ill a compliment as to imagine that you can remain any longer in the slightest doubt as to the truth of the proposition which it has been my main object in our discussion this morning to establish, — that the Northmen were acquainted, not only with the existence, situation, and extent of New England and the northern parts of the American continent, but also with the existence, situation, and extent of the regions of the same continent to the southwestward of those parts with which, as we have seen, they were more familiar.

Was there not, asked Mr. Cassall, some tradition among the Mexicans, before the time of the Spaniards, of land and powerful kingdoms *to the east* ?

It is well known, answered Mr. Nørset, that there did

---

\* This part of the tradition is somewhat mysterious. It is difficult to believe that they could have seen any wood cut with the axes of either Northmen or Irish visitants, since it is hardly probable that any timber could exist which had retained the marks of the axe for six hundred years. It is more probable that some timber, cut by Spanish axes, had drifted from Cuba or elsewhere.

exist such a tradition, and the fact may not be unworthy of observation. It shows that they must either have themselves had intercourse with some from these eastern kingdoms, or have received accounts from those who had.\* In either case, the visits of the Northmen to the southern shores of the continent of North America explain the source of the tradition.

Well, said the doctor, I am not satisfied, and it does not signify talking. You do not profess to have shown any more, by all this about Huitramannaland, than that the Northmen visited the land, and were acquainted with its situation and connection with the continent —

And, pray, doctor, interrupted Mr. Norset, is not that something to show, when you ridiculed so much, at first, all idea of the discoveries of the Northmen?

A shade passed across the doctor's countenance at this allusion, and he continued, in rather a sharp tone; — But we find very little definite, precise, and detailed, as in the case of the expeditions to Vinland.

You know, doctor, that there is an old saying, that we must walk before we can run. So it is necessary, before a subject can be thoroughly investigated and understood in all its branches, that a *glimpse* of its bearings or of its *probable* bearings should first be seen. Here is a case in point. You acknowledge that your interest is excited with respect to Huitramannaland; that it has been shown that the Northmen were acquainted with the existence, situation, and extent of the southern as well as northern shores of the continent of North America; but you complain that you want more information as to the expeditions to

---

\* The existence of this tradition seems to confirm the idea, already expressed in previous notes, that the Mexican empire formerly extended to the eastern coast.

these southern shores. I am delighted to hear it. You have thus got your *cue* ; follow it out. Who knows but you may yourself go over to Iceland some day, and search among old dusty parchments and time-worn manuscripts, and make some wonderful discoveries, touching the matter in question ; and then we shall have announced, — “ A Chorographical, Geographical, Historical Account of the most ancient Country of Huitramannaland ; compiled from authentic documents, by Melchisidec Dubital, M. D., M. N. K. W. S., &c. &c.”

I'll present you with the first copy, said the doctor, something like a smile being forced upon his countenance.

I am obliged to you, doctor ; and, in anticipation, doubtless it will be an interesting volume.

The doctor gave a gracious inclination of the head.

You have now, doctor, heard all the contents of the most important and interesting of the manuscript documents which have been published in this volume.

What ! does this Huitramannaland story bring us to the last of them ?

Even so, doctor ; or at least the last which it will be necessary for us to examine thus in detail ; for it cannot be disputed, I think, that it has been now demonstrated, beyond the possibility of controversy, and by all the evidence which can establish any point in the most authentic history, — that America was known to Europeans at least five centuries before the time of Colon's alleged discoveries ; that the western hemisphere was discovered and settled by the Northmen in the ninth and tenth centuries, (Iceland in the ninth, Greenland in the tenth ; ) that the coasts of the continent of North America south of Greenland were discovered by Biarni Heriulfson, in 985 ; that these parts of the continent were subsequently visited

many times by the Northmen, for the express purpose of exploration; that we have positive authentic records of the residence of the Northmen on these parts of the continent, at different times, for periods of some years' duration, during which time the birth of one individual is recorded to have taken place,—the ancestor of many well-known and illustrious characters, some of whom are still living; that it is very probable a permanent colony was settled, not only in Iceland and Greenland, which is certain, but within the borders of New England; and, moreover, that not only were Greenland and the other northern portions of this continent, as far as New England, well known to, and explored by, these Northmen, but that they also made expeditions to, and were well acquainted with, the existence, situation, and extent, absolutely and relatively, of the more southern portions of the continent, at least as far as Florida. To examine further the evidence, which we have already seen to be so abundant and so overwhelming as to the positive certainty of these discoveries and expeditions, would, I think, be needlessly occupying our time. What say you, doctor?

But the doctor was anxious, as usual, to avoid reply to a question, any direct answer to which must involve him in some compromise, either of the necessary correctness of his expressed opinions, or of the convictions which evidence had forced upon him, but which he esteemed that it would be an acknowledgment of his fallibility to confess. He therefore evaded all direct reply, by remarking,— You must remember, Mr. Norset, that there is another class of documents which you said existed. I fancy you want conveniently to forget all about these.

Not at all, doctor; you are quite mistaken there. I

shall be glad to allude to them, though they will not require any very lengthened discussion.

What is it that you pretend they do towards establishing the evidence of the authenticity of these discoveries and visits of the Northmen?

Why, to tell you the truth, doctor, I care very little, and shall therefore trouble you very little with inquiring, how far they tend to establish this evidence. This evidence has already been shown to be thoroughly demonstrative, and any body who is not satisfied with that which has been adduced, can be satisfied with no human testimony. I do not pretend, therefore, to adduce these other documents, — the monuments remaining in the countries visited, — as distinct evidence of the truth of the accounts we have had, excepting in one case, — that of the inscription from the island of *Kingiktorsoak*,\* — in which case much labor and argument may be saved by taking an incontrovertably authentic inscription as evidence.

For what, then, do you adduce them?

On two accounts. First, as *corroborative* testimony to that which has already been adduced, in the various points of external and internal evidence, as to the truth of the narratives themselves; and, second, as highly interesting records, existing in these distant lands, of the deeds of men, — whose nation and language, and the authentic written records of whose expeditions hither, still exist, — who visited and dwelt within these shores at a period so long anterior to the origin of the existing permanent colonization of these parts of the continent, and so long anterior to what has hitherto been *commonly* supposed to have been the period when a European foot first trod on transatlantic soil.

---

\* See, ante, p. 64.

Well, said the doctor, since that is the ground you take, we shall not occupy much time, I suppose, in the discussion of the subject. Shall we proceed with it at once?

I propose, answered Mr. Norset, that we leave it till the afternoon; and that, after dinner, we walk down to an ancient ruin in the neighborhood, which I have a strong idea these Northmen knew more about than any body else. We can talk over the other matters connected with this branch of the subject as we walk there and home again.

Agreed, said the doctor.

Will this arrangement suit your ideas of the fitness of things, Mr. Cassall?

Quite so.

We will start at half past three o'clock, then; so pray be within hail at that time.

We will not fail you.



## CHAPTER VI.

Remains of Northmen existing in America. — Buildings and Inscriptions in Greenland, and in New England. — Body found at Fall River.

SHALL we proceed on our way to the old ruin ? asked Mr. Norset of the doctor and Mr. Cassall, as he met them in the hall at the appointed hour.

Quite ready, answered each in a breath.

The distance is not more than half or three quarters of a mile, and so let us make the best use of our time, as we thread the narrow, crooked streets of the good old town of Newport, in discussing the matters which relate to the remains of the Northmen.

You talk of *remains*, said the doctor, as they proceeded on their way, just as folks talk of committing a man's remains to the grave. I suppose you don't mean to imply that we shall find a Northman grave-yard here ?

Not exactly that, doctor, certainly ; at any rate, not just in this part of the country.

Then, pray, let us have some definite idea what we are to understand, when you talk of the "REMAINS OF THE NORTHMEN."

I do n't know how to give you any more definite idea as to the character of these remains, than by stating that they are of two kinds : RUINED BUILDINGS and INSCRIPTIONS. Is that definite enough ?

Yes, we will take that. But you don't mean to say that ruined buildings and inscriptions are found, either in Greenland or in New England ?

Yes, I do. I mean to say that both are found in Greenland in great numbers, and owing their origin to the Northmen beyond the possibility of any doubt or cavil; and I mean to say that here, in New England, one building, if not more, exists, which it is very *probable* is the work of the Northmen, though I will not assert *positively* that such is the case; and I mean to say, that inscriptions exist here, the authenticity of which, as the work of the Northmen, can admit, I think, of no doubt in any rational and candid mind.

Well, exclaimed the doctor, this is certainly quite news. We must hear something more about the matter. Pray, what buildings are there in Greenland?

You will remember, doctor, that the parts of Greenland colonized by the Northmen were two, distinguished by the names of Eastbygd and Westbygd,\* or east and west inhabited tracts. Eastbygd was always the most thickly settled. Eastbygd was situated at the extreme southern extremity of Greenland, where, from Cape Desolation to Cape Farewell, as they are now called, the land lies almost due east and west. If you look at the map,† when we get home, you will see a settlement in that part called JULIANSHAABS, (Julian's Hope,) which is the modern Danish settlement in the same region where lay Eastbygd, the principal seat of the ancient Greenland colony. You will see, along the coast, to the north-westward from Cape Desolation, several settlements

---

\* See p. 62, ante.

† See note, p. 102, ante, and the map of British North America, in the Atlas of the U. K. Society. The author is aware of no other map, in any common atlas, in which these parts are marked with any degree of accuracy. The Penny Magazine for Oct. 1838, has already been referred to, as giving a very accessible account of Greenland.

marked, among which are *Frederikshaab*, *Godthaab*, *Sukkertoppen*, and *Holsteinborg*. These lay within the region of *Westbygd*. Of course it is within these two regions that ruins, if any exist, must be expected to be found.

I thought, said the doctor, that you stated that Greenland had lain, for nearly three centuries, — from the beginning of the fifteenth century to the year 1721, — unvisited and unknown, or nearly so. How, then, can it be discovered which are the regions to which these ancient names belong?

There exist, answered Mr. Norset, ancient, very exact and minute geographical descriptions of Greenland, in which the localities are mentioned and described. There are three, in particular, of this character: the first is one which I have already mentioned, as describing an expedition made far into the northern regions by some of these Northmen; \* the second is a brief *chorography*, as it is termed, or, in more plain English, *survey* of Greenland, † of very great antiquity; the third is a mere detailed account of the course to and localities of Greenland, in which the relative situations of each are described with a precise minuteness. ‡ This document is likewise one of great antiquity. Translations of it have several times been published; one of which, in English, is contained in that curious and valuable work, "*Purchas his Pilgrimes*," imprinted in London, (as the old title-pages say,) 1625.

\* *Antiq. Am.* p. 269.

† *Antiq. Am.* p. 296. It is worthy remark, that *Heriulfness* (which is known and many times expressly mentioned to have been in *Eastbygd*) is expressly stated to have lain to the *extreme south* of Greenland. This seems alone to settle the question of the position of *Eastbygd* definitively, while the ruins there discovered leave no doubt about the matter.

‡ *Antiq. Am.* p. 3 1.

So you see that we have the means of determining localities. In addition to which, the discovery of extensive ruins has itself been a guide in determining general localities, as of the position of the whole colony of Eastbygd.

Proceed, then, pray, and tell us what ruins there are in these quarters.

Vast numbers have been and are continually being found in each tract, but principally in Eastbygd or the neighborhood of Julianshaabs.

Let us see, said the doctor; I think we have heard more about Eireksfiord and Brattahlid than any other places. Pray, do you ascertain those localities, and find any ruins there?

Both, doctor, doubtless to your satisfaction. There is an arm of the sea in those parts, called, at present, *Tunnulliorbik*, which corresponds to the description of Eireksfiord; and there are in its neighborhood very many ruins. It would be difficult precisely to determine which of these are the ruins of the hall of Eirek, in which it was that the festivities of Brattahlid were held, and its hospitalities extended to all strangers.

Heriulf, said the doctor, he was one of the first settlers, and was the father of Biarni, who first saw the coasts of New England. Can his residence be determined?

The promontory called at this day *Ikigeit*, near Cape Farewell, would seem to be the ancient Heriulfness. Considerable ruins exist there at the present time.

Are there any other remarkable ruins in those parts? inquired Mr. Cassall.

Yes, answered Mr. Norset, there are many others of interest. I mentioned, I believe, before, that the Greenland colonies increased so rapidly, after their first settle-

ment, that, in the year 1121, they were raised into an Episcopal diocese.\* The Episcopal station was at GARDAR,† which is described as being situated at the extremity of an inlet named *Einarsford*. Here there was erected a magnificent cathedral, and, for three hundred years, the Episcopal function was discharged there. At length, as we have seen, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the colony was deserted, and the diocese was of course no longer maintained. There is a creek in those parts, now called *Igaliko*, which corresponds to the description given of *Einarsford*. At the extremity of this creek have been found many ruins, and, among the rest, very extensive remains of a large church, on some of the tombs surrounding which, legible inscriptions have been found. There can be no doubt that this was the cathedral of Gardar. It would, however, be impossible to detail all the various remains, both in the way of ruins and of inscriptions, which exist in Greenland.

I suppose no little pains must have been taken in the search for these remains? said Mr. Cassall.

A great interest is felt in them, and continued search and fresh discoveries are being constantly made. The Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians is about to publish a large work devoted expressly to this subject, which will be full of interest.

When shall we come to this old ruin? said the doctor, with some impatience in his manner. We have been talking long enough about the ruins in Greenland; but I want to see this ruin in New England, which you tell us stands here in Newport.

Don't be impatient, doctor; we have not been very

---

\* Suffragan to the archbishop of Drontheim in Norway.

† See, ante, p. 70.

long. However, we have only to turn the corner of that street, — Mill street they call it, if I remember right, — and we shall come immediately upon the old ruin.

I assure you, said the doctor, my curiosity is highly excited. I have seen many an ancient ruin in Europe and Asia, but I never heard of any of this kind in America before.

I hope you will not be disappointed, then, doctor. This ruin differs very much from most that you will have seen in either Europe or Asia.

During the last part of this conversation they had turned the corner of the street, and came full in view of the old ruin.

Now, doctor, behold! said Mr. Norset, stopping short and pointing to the ruin.

The doctor looked about him for some time, as if unable to fix upon the object. At length he said, in a disappointed tone, —

Is that all?

That is all, answered Mr. Norset; I told you that you must not expect to see an extensive ruin, such as meets the eye in the old world. Let us advance nearer.

When they reached the gate of the field in which the ruin stands, — and where, at that time, some laborers were at work, getting in the corn, — the doctor's eye fell upon a white painted board, which lay just by the side of the gate, and which had evidently been pulled off by violence, the place where it had been affixed to the gate being very visible. The doctor picked up the board, and read aloud the purport of its inscription.

“NO ADMITTANCE!” Humph, — added he, after a moment's pause, as if to assure himself that he read aright, — this is a pretty way of receiving one at the only object of the kind which exists throughout the whole

United States of North America. So we must n't approach the building, but must gaze at it from afar off, in mute wonderment, I suppose.

- It is, truly, rather a curious reception; for, though the mere physical appearance presented by this ruin falls far short, indeed, of the most distant approach to that presented by a Kenilworth, or a Pomfret, or a Kirkstall, or any other of these numerous and interesting remains of antiquity, to which, in the "old country," access is undenied and free to whomsoever listeth to approach, yet there must necessarily be an *interest* attaching to this ruin not far short of what attaches to any of those, if it is only on account of its singleness; which interest must be doubly increased if any connection can be shown to exist between it and the Northmen, the first discoverers of the land.

Well, said the doctor, I do n't intend to be baffled in this way; so suppose, — as some good soul, in honest indignation, has thrown down this notice where nobody need see it, — suppose we take French leave, and walk in.

They did so, and approached the ruin, which is enclosed immediately round about by a slight paling. The doctor walked round the building once or twice; then went inside; — looked up, down, and all around, from top to bottom; — scanned each of the supporting columns separately, and gazed steadfastly at each of the orifices in the wall, which might be windows; and at length said, in a tone of mingled chagrin and disappointment, —

I never saw such an unsatisfactory ruin in my life.

That is a conclusion to which it is natural you should come, doctor, said Mr. Norset. In old ruins in general, such as Kenilworth Castle, you may spend days in looking at the different parts, and still have something fresh

to see;—you may climb one tower, enter one hall, mount one chamber, or descend into one dark donjon cell after another, and still fancy that something will presently be seen to throw some light upon the matter. But here the case is very different. An area of fifteen feet diameter, more or less, contains all that is here to be beheld; and you look at these heavy columns, and the roofless, round, and massive tower which they support, and you may look as long, and hard, and often, as you please; but nothing but eight bare columns, and a supported tower, as bare, can you discover.

Certainly the structure is curious, remarked the doctor, going up to one of the columns. Why, these columns must be a yard in diameter at least, and built as solidly as if the stone and the cement were one. It would almost seem as if a structure like this might last forever.

Its actual durability seems proportioned to its apparent strength; for, though it is roofless and the walls are perfectly bare, yet no mouldering stone is seen; all seems solid as a rock. It certainly is of prodigious strength.

Halloo! exclaimed the doctor, I see bricks there: that tells tales: what are those bricks?

I am informed that the tower was used, during the last war, as a magazine. A floor was put in, the remains of which you see, and some of these windows, or whatever they were, bricked up for a fire-place and what not.

The columns are most singular, again observed the doctor:—why, the top of each of them,—for they have no capitals, and are certainly of no order of architecture under heaven, except their own,—projects considerably beyond the lower edge of the tower which they support. I have never, in all my travels, seen the like



of this, that is certain. What is the height of the building ?

I should say, said Mr. Norset, that the columns are about ten feet high, and the tower twice the height, making, altogether, thirty feet ; — but here, Mr. Cassall, you have a walking-stick, and the sun is shining ; we can measure by the shadows easily enough. Your stick is three feet long ; — come, stick it in the ground, if you please, and measure its shadow.

Four feet and a half, said Mr. Cassall.

Now, then, let us measure the shadow of the tower. It is about forty-five or six feet. Then, of course, the tower is somewhere about thirty feet high, — just what I measured by my eye.

Well, now, said the doctor, who built this tower ?

Ah, doctor, that is the very question.

Are there no traditions about it ?

Not the slightest. The oldest inhabitant knows no more about it than you or I. There is no legend or tradition, whatever. They commonly call it the "*Old Mill*," just because they know nothing about it. So it has always been called, and so it is called in old deeds ; but no one ever heard of its being a mill ; nor is there any *record* of its ever having been a mill ; and no one can look at it, who has ever seen a mill of any kind, and think for a moment that it is possible it ever was a mill. There is no clue, whatever, in record, tradition, or report, to its origin or purpose.

Let us see, said the doctor, what these men will say about it, who are so busy talking, over yonder. That old man seems to be very zealously denouncing his opinion. Surely politics must be the subject. I'll go and speak to him.

The doctor approached to where the men were busy

with the corn. One of them, a man apparently about sixty years of age, tall and hard-featured, and whose whole appearance showed that his present employment was an accustomed one, was talking with much energy, and louder than the rest. As the doctor approached, he caught these words :

"I tell you they knows nothing about it ; — they do n't care for the people ; — thirty millions o' dollars ; — I tell you Andrew Jackson's ruined the country ; — I knows all about it."

The doctor drew near, and addressed him : — Good afternoon, my friend, —

I say Andrew Jackson's ruined the country ; — thirty millions o' dollars ; — augh, sir ; good afternoon, sir ; — I say, sir, Andrew Jackson's ruined the country.

To be sure, who doubts it? He makes all the money himself, you know, and puts it all in his own pocket, said the doctor, falling in with the old man, and winking his eye, as he spoke, at Mr. Norset and Mr. Cassall.

Yes he has, sir, that he has. They do n't care for the people.

You 're hard at work, my friend.

Yes, sir, we must work in these times. Thirty millions o' dollars, cheated out of the people!

Is this good land, friend?

I guess it 's kind o' pretty middling, answered the old man, in a tone which implied that he was thinking more of politics than of the quality of the land.

That 's well, said the doctor ; you seem to have a pretty fair crop ; now I want to ask you another question about this place ; — I dare say you can tell me?

I guess I can tell you any thing, answered the old man, resting a moment from his work.

I thought so. I want to ask you about this "old mill," here. Do you know any thing about it?

That old mill, sir! O, yes, that old mill;— why, yes, sir, that are old mill, — the Indians built that.

O, indeed; the Indians built it, did they? I didn't know they ever built mills of stone.

Yes, sir; the Indians built that are old mill.

Did you ever hear of its being used as a mill?

No, I guess not; the Indians built that are mill, a many years ago.

Thank you, friend; I wanted to know something about it, said the doctor, finding further inquiry at this source of information useless, and affecting to be satisfied.

You're not a Jackson man, sir, I'll be bound? said the old man, as the doctor was about to rejoin his companions.

I should think you're not, friend, answered the doctor, again turning to address the old man.

To be sure I a'nt. I tell you, sir, Andrew Jackson's ruined the country.

I suppose you didn't vote for him at his last election?

Yes, I voted for him then;— that's going seven years since.

Why did you vote for such a bad man?

Because they told us how he'd do fine things for us.

And so he hasn't done them, aye? I suppose you have to work a great deal harder now than you did then?

Why, I guess it's much about the same. But jest listen what folks says about him now! I tell you, sir, Andrew Jackson's ruined the country;— thirty million o' dollars. — Yes, sir, I knows all about it.

So I see, my good friend. Well, I hope we shall have better times. Good afternoon, friend.

Good afternoon, sir. Yes, I say Andrew Jackson's

ruined the country ; I knows all about it : a fine man that is, I know, mumbled the old man to himself, as he applied himself again to his work.

The doctor returned to his companions in high glee.

That comes of knowing human nature, said he, in a tone of complete self-satisfaction.

Ah ! you parted good friends, doctor, said Mr. Norset, and I dare say he thinks you know all about politics, — next to himself.

I dare say he does, said the doctor, laughing ; but he is uncommonly mistaken, for I never trouble my head with politics, I can assure you. One man's just as good as another to me, if he's only an honest man, and does his best for his country's happiness. The old man is a simple-hearted, honest fellow, however, he added, whatever else he may be. But I understand human nature, you see.

That is plain. But I hope you are much the wiser for the information he gave you ?

O yes. He said the Indians built the old mill, replied the doctor.

Ha ! ha ! The Indians, indeed ! Nobody ever yet suspected them of building massive stone and mortar columns and towers.

Then I suppose, Mr. Norset, said Mr. Cassall, the long and the short of the matter is, that you think the Northmen built it.

I cannot help having a strong opinion that such was the case, indeed ; and my reasons are simply these : — We know that no Indians ever did or could build it. It is certain that it has not been built by an Anglo-Saxon hand since this country was colonized from England, else some record must remain, — and none does exist or has existed within the memory of man. It commands a

full view of the harbor and of the opposite coast, thus forming a most admirable place of lookout. We have seen it demonstrated from the manuscript documents, the evidence of which we have examined, that the Northmen resided in this immediate neighborhood for, at any rate, some years; and it would certainly appear, from the manner in which it is stated that each one,\* after Leif, asked of him the use of the dwellings which he had built, and which he agreed expressly to *lend*, but not to *give* them, — thus implying that they would be available at a *future* day to himself, — that the buildings erected by the Northmen here were substantial, most probably of stone, *as dwellings erected by them are found to have been in Greenland.*† The strength and thickness of these walls correspond precisely to the structure of the ruins found in Greenland. These points, then, presenting so many coincidences, and such difficulties existing as to the origin of the structure, the question arises, to give these coincidences additional force, — By whom can this tower possibly have been built *except* by the Northmen? We know that they were capable of building it, because we find structures of the same age, and equal strength, and requiring as much skill, which are known to owe their origin to them. The obvious utility of such a building, as a place of lookout for them, I need not state.

We must have some more testimony, before we can set this down as the ruin of a Northman structure, said the doctor, in a somewhat authoritative tone.

---

\* See, ante, p. 163. The same is related of Freydis in *Antiq. Am.* p. 66, and it has been seen that Thorvald occupied the same erections, (ante, p. 119.) Thus these buildings, erected in 1000, must have been in good condition in 1012.

† The tower in question is built of the stone found in the immediate neighborhood.

I grant you, answered Mr. Norset, that we cannot yet *positively* determine the point. I think, however, you will allow that there is great *probability* this was the erection of the Northmen.

I will not pretend to determine any thing about it, said the doctor, for I never heard of the old ruin, here, before you mentioned it. What is said about it in the book?

Nothing. The Northern Antiquarian Society were ignorant of the existence of the tower when the book was published, and are so to this day, although they will be made acquainted with it in due time. When they have determined what the probable character of buildings erected by the Northmen,\* for purposes of lookout, would be, the existence and character of this will be announced to them, but not before. Queries have already been addressed to them to this effect.

Are there any other ruins of any kind in this part of the country, asked Mr. Cassall, which can be supposed to be the work of the Northmen?

None have, at present, been discovered. It is not, however, impossible that such may exist, for they have never been searched for.\* It is obvious that, as the Northmen remained here so long, and appear to have always come here with the idea of forming permanent settlements, they would probably leave behind them many

---

\* It is worthy of observation, that the principal seat of Metacom, or *king Philip*, as he is commonly called, chief of the Wampanoags, was in nearly precisely the same situation as Leifsbudir. It is well known that, after his destruction, (1677,) every place in the neighborhood which could afford shelter to the Indians was destroyed. It is very possible that the dwellings erected by Leif there may have then existed, but have been destroyed at that time. Any such erections would afford a most advantageous position for the Indians.

signs of their presence here. How far these have all now decayed it is impossible to determine. No careful search or examination has ever yet been instituted.

I suppose, however, said Mr. Cassall, that it is impossible to form any conjecture as to which party it was that erected this particular tower.

Of course we cannot determine that point with certainty; but it appears to me most probable that it was erected by Thorvald's party. You will remember that this party remained here for three full years, and that only a *part* of the number ever left the place at any one time. We have no record of their mode of occupation during these three years; but the erection of this tower might well and usefully occupy a part of the time.

That idea appears probably correct, I think, observed Mr. Cassall.

Well, said the doctor, whatever you may say, this ruin is certainly something like those hints about Huitramannaland. It seems to give some *cue*, but leaves one unsatisfied. One wants to know more about it. It is certainly a very remarkable ruin. But, since we seem able to get little more satisfaction from the contemplation of it, suppose we now leave it, and hear what there is to be said about *inscriptions*, as we walk home. You said there were several of these inscriptions in Greenland. What are they?

They are numerous, and of various kinds. Many are monumental, merely. The most interesting and important is the one to which I have already alluded, and which was found, in the year 1824, on the island of KINGIKTORSOAK, in  $72^{\circ} 55'$  north latitude, and  $56^{\circ} 5'$  west longitude. This inscription is in the possession of the Northern Antiquarian Society, and an accurate engraving of it is given in the volume published by them.

It is a genuine Runic inscription, and consists of plain, straight-forward Runic characters, with much fewer of the cryptographic characters than we often meet with.

What do you mean by cryptographic characters? asked Mr. Cassall.

Monograms, or combinations of several letters into one figure, so that it is not straight-forward reading, but requires much skill, and great knowledge of the ancient modes of combination, in order to be deciphered.

And what is the substance of the inscription found in Kingiktorsoak? asked the doctor.

There were found in the immediate neighborhood of the spot where this inscription was found, — which is cut on a small piece of polished stone, — three blocks of stone placed in a regular triangular figure, one larger, the two others smaller. There can be no doubt that the inscription was formerly fixed into the larger one, but had fallen out through the action of the weather. I copied the inscription before we started: it runs literally thus: — “ERLING SIGHVATSSON, AND BIARNI THORDARSON, AND EINDRIDI ODDSSON, ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK, (that is, the *Saturday*,) BEFORE THE DAY OF VICTORY, (this was a feast day known by that name, and in use among the ancient Icelanders; it fell on the 25TH APRIL,) ERECTED THESE MARKS, AND EXPLORED (this place) IN THE YEAR 1135.” I should remark, that this date is not quite certain, though this interpretation is most probably correct. The character of the inscription, however, absolutely proves that it could not have been *later* than the twelfth century; so that there can be little doubt the date 1135 is nearly, if not exactly, the correct one.

Certainly that is a remarkable inscription, observed Mr. Cassall; and there can be no doubt that it does, as



you stated, establish, beyond the possibility of controversy, the discoveries of the Northmen in those extreme northern regions at that early period.

And how much, said Mr. Norset, ought we not to respect and admire the enterprising spirit which led the Northmen to explore these remote regions of the western hemisphere. If the eulogy bestowed by Bancroft upon Cabot was deserved, who, in the year 1517, penetrated to  $67^{\circ} 50'$  north latitude, how much more ought not the same, and a much higher eulogy, to be applied to the Northmen, who, *nearly four centuries earlier*, explored with care as far as  $72^{\circ} 55'$  north latitude, and *far beyond*, as I have shown.\* How well and truly may it not be said of *them*, † that “*they* boldly prosecuted their designs, making their way through regions into which it was, long afterwards, esteemed an act of the most intrepid maritime adventure to penetrate!”

These remarks may be justly made, indeed, said Mr. Cassall; but are there no other inscriptions which bear directly upon the discoveries of the Northmen in these parts?

There doubtless exist others, which will be published in the work I mentioned. The inscription at Kingiktorsoak is the most important one yet published. I must not forget to allude to a very remarkable inscription which exists in Iceland, in many parts of which Runic inscriptions are found. The one I allude to exists in the southern portion of the island, in a celebrated cave, called *Paradisarhellir*, or the *Cave of Paradise*. This inscription is more ancient than that found at Kingiktorsoak. At the time that the “*Antiquitates Americanae*” was published, it had not been deciphered, but private infor-

---

\* Ante, p. 64.

† Bancroft's Hist. U. S. vol. i. p. 12.

mation, derived from Rafn, the editor of the volume, has since conveyed the intelligence that one of the profoundest Runic scholars in Copenhagen has since succeeded in deciphering it, and that it is found to relate directly to the subject of the discovery of the continent of America. The publication of Professor FINN MAGNUSSEN'S elucidation of this inscription will be a matter of great interest.

And, pray, asked the doctor, does this inscription bear any resemblance to any of the inscriptions which you state have been found in this country?

It does. Many parts of it bear a great resemblance, in character, to many parts of the inscription on the Assonet Rock and —

Wait a minute; where is the Assonet Rock? You forget that, though I have occasionally visited Boston, I am, in truth, a stranger in New England. This Assonet Rock may be very notorious, but I don't know where it is.

You will remember, doctor, that we traced, on the map, the course of Leif and others, up to Mount Hope Bay, through which runs the *Taunton River*, called, by the Indians, *Cohannet*, but, more anciently, *Assoonet*. This last name a neck of land retains, which lies conspicuously on the map, about four miles above Mount Hope Bay, and to the westward of which runs the Taunton River, though a small stream called (though erroneously) Smith's Creek,\* runs to the eastward. It is on this neck of land that the Assonet Rock, more commonly termed the "Dighton Writing Rock," stands. It stands on the west side of the

---

\*How the term *creek* came to be applied to an inland stream, is difficult to discover. It need hardly be said that a *creek* means, only and solely, an inlet of the sea or ocean.

Assonet neck, and is about ten or twelve feet from the water's edge at low tide, but, at high tide, it is completely immersed in the water. It is certain, however, that the water has been encroaching on the land in this part. The shore, at high tide, has, within the memory of man, become more distant from the rock than formerly, though now only a few feet from it.\* There is no doubt, therefore, that, at the distance of three or four centuries back, the rock was completely out of the reach of the tide.

There is an inscription on this rock, then, is there ?

There is.

And do you say that it was made by the Northmen ?

I say that there can be little rational doubt that such was the fact.

But I have heard it stated, observed Mr. Cassall, that Mr. Catlin says it is an Indian inscription.

Mr. Catlin ! exclaimed the doctor, in amazement ; do you mean Mr. Catlin, the Indian traveller ? †

\* See *Antiq. Am.* p. 373, quoted from *Lort's* "Archæologia."

† The author begs here, most explicitly and distinctly, to state, that no personal allusion would, in the slightest degree, have been made here, had not a personal authority been, as he is informed, adduced, in order to subvert the facts in the present case. Although, of course, no candid mind can allow itself to be swayed by the *opinion* or authority of any one, however high his reputation, in a matter where *truth* is the object to be attained, and *facts* and *evidence* are capable of being adduced, — in opposition to which the *opinion* of any man is worthless, — yet it is necessary to show the fallacy of any asserted authority, which may possibly, at first mention, have some effect upon minds unacquainted with the facts and evidence in the case. This the author has endeavored to do, with the greatest delicacy and care. He would most distinctly state that no disrespect is intended or implied towards Mr. Catlin, or those who have used his name in a way, he believes, which Mr. Catlin himself never contemplated. This last remark is made because the author has *positive and immediate knowledge* of the fact, that Mr.

The same.

What, in the name of goodness, has he to do with any thing about inscriptions ?

I do n't know ; I am told that he says it is an Indian inscription.

I always thought, said the doctor, that Mr. Catlin had been an inquirer after Indian manners and customs. I have examined his Indian Gallery with great interest, and certainly think he deserves very great credit for the industry and labor and expense which he has bestowed upon his subject. Few persons have so thoroughly pursued their object, or so successfully, as he. But every man to his vocation. All this gives him no claim whatever, to be an authority in any matter relating to inscriptions, whether Indian or otherwise ; and how any body

---

Catlin distinctly stated, to two highly respectable gentlemen, by whom the question was directly put, that *he never had seen any Indian inscription like the Assonet Rock*. The author therefore necessarily presumes that Mr. Catlin never made such a statement, to the contrary effect, as has been attributed to him, but conceives that some expression of his has been misinterpreted. For Mr. Catlin himself, he entertains a high personal regard, and esteems his services and labors as valuable and important in many respects. As to those who have used Mr. Catlin's name, the author is not aware that it has been employed in any of the reviews, neither has he ever heard it employed in public. It is in other modes that the use of it has reached his ears ; though he has been informed that it has been more extensively employed, and he knows that some of the daily journals have made use of it. He entertains no doubt, that, by whomsoever it may have been employed, it must have originated in misapprehension of the statements made by Mr. Catlin, and in oversight of the bearing of such an authority. It is a misapprehension and oversight which might easily occur, and without any intentional want of candor ; but, at the same time, serious consequences may hence arise, in retarding the determination of *the truth* in this matter. It is necessary, therefore, clearly to set forth and explain this oversight and misapprehension in this place.

could seriously quote his authority with respect to an inscription asserted to be Runic, is past my comprehension to understand.

Well, doctor, I am told that he says it is like inscriptions which he has seen.

Like inscriptions which he has seen! exclaimed the doctor, with his peculiar expression of mingled contempt and self-complacency.

Let me put in a word there, interrupted Mr. Norset. Mr. Catlin has never yet seen the Assonet Rock, — or at least had not, at the time when these statements are asserted to have been made. That I know to be a fact. He had seen no more than drawings of it.

Come, this is good! continued the doctor. But supposing he had seen it,—what does he mean by saying it is *like* others he has seen. Unless it is *identically the same* in every line and figure, he can know nothing about its likeness, without having made ancient inscriptions his long and constant study, which we all know he has not. Nothing, Mr. Cassall, — he proceeded, in his usual somewhat dogmatic tone — nothing requires more profound skill and practice and learning, than the deciphering ancient inscriptions; and a common eye may often fancy a likeness where, in reality, and to the inspection of a practised eye, none exists, and vice versâ. Pray, what are these Indian inscriptions that Mr. Catlin has seen?

They are at the Red Pipe Stone Quarry, answered Mr. Cassall. This, as you know, is a sacred spot among the Indians, and there every Indian is anxious to leave his *mark*. These marks mostly consist of figures of animals, and they are there seen in vast numbers. “Many have the appearance,” Mr. Catlin tells us, “of having just been finished, and others appear so ancient as to have acquired a high polish.”

Mr. Catlin also expressly tells us, said Mr. Norset, that,\* "though *some* of these figures, in clusters or groups, may have been registered as a record of some historical facts, or traditions, yet I consider that the principal part of them have been produced for another purpose, and with the same meaning as our people cut or scribble their names in a cavern or a cupola, or any other extraordinary or famous place which they visit." They all exist confused together, without any arrangement or connection.

Well, and is this the character of the inscription on the Assonet Rock?

Most distinctly and decidedly I answer, no, it is not. It is diametrically the reverse. There is one pervading character over the whole of the parts of the inscription on the Assonet Rock. There are several distinctly formed letters, so distinct that almost he who runs may read; and there are various figures, formed so regularly and symmetrically as shows that they were carefully and deliberately done; that they must have been formed at the same time, if not by the same hand; and that there exists a meaning to, and a relation between, all the parts.

And is there any other place where Mr. Catlin states that he has seen Indian inscriptions on rocks?

None.

This Red Pipe Stone Quarry, then, is peculiar, and is marked on account of its sacredness, and from the desire to leave, *there in particular*, some memorial?

Just so.

Do you say that on the Assonet Rock there is no jumble of marks of animals?

---

\* Letter of Mr. Catlin, copied from New York paper into Boston Transcript of Jan. 1, 1839.

There is no jumble at all, though the figures are numerous; much less is there a jumble of figures of animals. Only two animals can be traced; one is a bird,—*the ancient emblem of navigation*; the other is apparently a bullock, which is placed in a recumbent position,—*obviously the emblem of a settlement here*, that animal being anciently considered the most important means to the cultivation of the soil.

Then what is the meaning of Mr. Catlin's saying that he has seen *inscriptions like the Assonet Rock* made by the Indians? I see no point of similitude.

You must not put too much into Mr. Catlin's mouth, said Mr. Cassall. I don't know that he ever said so. I only know that his name has been frequently used in a way that implies his having said so.

Certainly that caution is necessary, said Mr. Norset. For my own part I don't believe Mr. Catlin ever said or meant such a thing. There is nothing like it in any printed letters of his that I have seen. It appears plain to me that there has been some misapprehension on the part of those who have used his name, as to what he really has stated. I imagine the truth to be, that, having seen rocks marked by the Indians, and, hearing that the Assonet Rock is marked also in a peculiar manner, all that he *means* in any thing he has said on the subject is, that he has seen inscriptions made by the Indians like this, that is, simply, *also*; — not that the same character, or any one point of resemblance, except the mere fact of being cut on a rock, exists between the two. So a man who had visited St. Peter's at Rome, might say that the wooden church on the hill yonder is like it, not meaning that the two resemble each other in any one point, except in the fact of each being a place wherein people assemble to worship.

I only know, said Mr. Cassall, that Mr. Catlin's authority has been quoted, certainly with little apparent reason, to show that this is not an inscription of the Northmen.

Then it is little to the credit of the quoter, answered the doctor, shortly, and rather crustily.

Don't condemn too hastily, doctor, said Mr. Norset; it is very evident that there must have been some oversight committed by whoever has appealed to this authority. No person of any acquaintance with literature could, certainly, have quoted Mr. Catlin's reports of Indian markings as evidence in a matter of this kind, —

Perfectly absurd, interrupted the doctor, in a tone little gentler than before.

— Upon deliberate consideration, continued Mr. Norset. There must have been some oversight. I don't pretend to explain how it happened. I know Mr. Catlin is a man of intelligence, and an honorable man, and I am certain that he would not wittingly lend himself to any thing which he did not esteem correct; but, as the doctor has justly observed, he has never studied Runic inscriptions, or any other inscriptions, and can be of no authority whatever with respect to them, although of the highest with respect to matters within his own department.

Now, then, pray tell us, said the doctor, what is the character of the inscription on the Assonet Rock, and wherein it bears a resemblance to the inscription in the Cave of Paradise. That resemblance will be a very important point in order to establish its authenticity as a work of the Northmen.

In the Paradisarhellir, answered Mr. Norset, are found many distinct and perfect letters, but a great portion of the inscription is composed of cryptographs of a very peculiar description. They are *figures*, of various kinds, made up of different letters, joined together in various



modes of combination and contraction. They put me in mind of a picture I once saw of the ruins of Persepolis, which, at a little distance, appeared a good pen and ink drawing, and had a fine effect; but, approaching nearer, you perceived that every mark and line in the picture was in clear Italian writing, and, if you could once make out where to begin, and how to proceed, you found that this writing comprised a description of the scene which, in combination, it composed. So it is in the *Paradisarhellir*. We there find various different figures, as of a boat, and others less recognizable, which figures are made up of letters contracted and connected together. Any one who has studied Runic characters at all, will perceive that they are Runic characters which are thus combined, though he may not, and cannot, without great labor and study, be able to decipher them. To a common eye, the whole can certainly appear little else than a strange jumble of outlandish marks. It is precisely the same with the *Assonet Rock*.\* Here there are several distinct letters, recording the name of Thorfinn and the numerals in the manuscripts, CXXXI, which you will remember was the number which, after the departure of Thorhall and his companions, remained with Thorfinn and went to Hóp. A great portion of the inscription, however, is composed of cryptographs, like those in the Cave of Paradise. There

---

\* It seems quite unnecessary to enter here into any proof that the Northmen were accustomed to represent historical events on stone and otherwise, both in figure and by inscription. No one will be so hardy as to dispute the point, when it is well known that many hundreds of Runic inscriptions exist to this day in England, and in every other country connected with the Northern race. The *Paradisarhellir* alone is sufficient to prove the fact. It may be observed that there are many Runic inscriptions in England which resemble precisely, in cryptographic character, the inscriptions in the *Paradisarhellir* and on the *Assonet Rock*.

are figures of various kinds, — one a ship, &c. &c. — obviously, to a person at all accustomed to the Runic character, made up in a great measure of Runic characters. I doubt not that the fragment of this inscription which remains, — for only a small portion of the original is discernible, much has been broken off and much gradually worn away since the tide has reached it, — will be capable of being deciphered by careful study.

Certainly, said the doctor, these facts are strong. I most undoubtedly thought the inscription story was all a bag of moonshine.

You speak of those cryptographs, observed Mr. Cassall; are they only found in Runic inscriptions?

O no; we very often meet with them in Roman inscriptions of the middle ages. The monks were fond of such fantastic inventions. To give a single example of their mode of perverting the common arrangement of letters, I will cite one case which I happen to remember. In 1744, the chancel of a priory, of the date of 1115, was opened at Monkton Farley, in Wiltshire, in England. There a tomb was found,\* and on it the following curious inscription,† — have you a pencil and paper, for I must write it down to show you.

\* Camden, (ut ante,) vol. i. p. 101.

† Many other much more complicated and curious illustrations might have been introduced. This one is selected, because, in it, every distinct letter is in fact given, while yet, by the great majority of readers, probably not one word will be capable of being deciphered. It will thus be more clearly seen how exceedingly difficult it must be to decipher Runic cryptographs, all of which are composed of characters now out of use, and even those characters being contracted and most artificially combined. It will be obvious that much learning and long practice must be necessary, and that the casual opinion of any indifferent person must be utterly worthless.

✠ H I A E T I B T P D E C H A L T B I A R R E T O

Q B T M A D I T H P P R A D O N A ✠

This, in plain straight-forward letters, reads as follows:—

Hic jacet Ilbertus  
De Chat bonitate refertus;  
Qui cum Brotona  
Dedit hic perplurima dona.

Which may, if you please, be “done into English” thus:—

Here Ilbert de Chat, he lies,  
Renowned as a good man and wise;  
Brotona he gave, and other  
Good gifts to the church, holy mother.

It is true, there are not here any figures of objects made up of letters, but you see the same tendency to secret and obscure compositions of letters. There are, indeed, some compositions of letters of this kind, which have only recently ceased to have a common use. This is the case with the three letters which comprise the word **THE**. Doctor, you have been in London: do you remember Panyer Alley?

I can't say that I do, answered the doctor.

Not know Panyer Alley! I thought every one who had ever been in London had been there, and that almost every one who had never been in London had heard of it; for, though,—to reverse Milton's phrase,—“the *least*, yet not the *last in fame*” is this of all the

alleys and courts which have become almost *classical* in London. However, there exists on the right hand side, as you pass up this alley from Paternoster Row, an ancient inscription. I forget its exact date, and it does not much matter. It is more than two centuries back, I believe. The inscription is surmounted by the sculpture of a boy kneeling in a basket-panyer; and beneath is the following, thus:—

WHEN YOY HAVE GONE  
 Y CITTIE ROVNDE  
 YET STILL THIS IS  
 Y HIGHEST GROVNDE

Now it would puzzle many persons to discover what is meant by the letter *y*, with a little *e* over it: it spells nothing. This, however, is the mode in which we find the word **THE** expressed in most documents of the last century, both written and engraved; not so often, though frequently, in letter-press printing.\*

What can be the origin of such a mark? asked Mr. Cassall.

It appears to me that it must have originated thus:— Most ancient alphabets had a single letter to express the sound **TH**, which we express by two letters. Among the rest we find this letter in the Norse and Saxon alphabets. The small letter expressing this sound in those alphabets bears a great resemblance to our common small *y*; and

---

\* So we find, very frequently, in old works and writings, the single capital letter **I** used for the word **EYE**. Thus the line in Shakspeare's *Hamlet*, (a. i. sc. 2,) commonly printed,—

“ I shall not look upon his like again,”

is, properly,—

“ Eye shall not look upon his like again.”

the letter *e* was probably generally joined in with it at the top. When the peculiarities of the Saxon alphabet fell into disuse, this composition of THE still remained in use, just as the marks “&” and “&c.” do at present; and the writers, being ignorant of the meaning of the Saxon letter expressing the sound TH, converted it into a Y, the use of which, once introduced, soon became general.

That seems a satisfactory explanation.

And now, — to return to the inscription on the Assonet Rock, — I must again ask you, doctor, if you do not see every reason to presume this inscription to have been the work of the Northmen? It stands in a region which we have seen that they frequented; — it is of a character which none of the natives have ever used, or ever sculptured; — it bears a great resemblance, in its mode of composition, to the inscription (which has been interpreted) in the Paradisarthellir; and it exhibits several distinct letters, which record the name of Thorfinn and the number CXXXI, which was precisely that of his companions. What say you?

I am sure I don't know whether they made it, or not, said the doctor, evasively. Perhaps there may be something in what you say. Are there any other inscriptions in New England?

Report has been made of several, but none others have been positively ascertained to exist, except some in this immediate neighborhood.\* One, however, has been

---

\* It would seem rational to expect that some inscriptions may be discovered on the shore of Buzzard's Bay, where Thorfinn dwelt for two years. The author has marked this spot on the map with the name of *Thorfinnsbudir*, (Thorfinnsbooths or residence,) to distinguish it from *Leifsbudir*, the other place of permanent residence of the Northmen in New England.

stated to exist on the opposite bank of the Taunton River to that on which the Assonet Rock stands. Search will be made after it. At present, it has not been inspected.

And what are the inscriptions in this neighborhood?

They lie near the shore, about seven miles hence. They exist on several distinct rocks. They have, however, suffered more injury from the action of the elements, than even the Assonet Rock. Some of them are situated on the coast of Narraganset Bay, in this island; — others on the shore of Seaconnet Passage, in Tiverton, on the main land; both being about the same distance from Newport, and exhibiting the same general character; those at Tiverton, however, having more frequent representations of the human figure than the others. The Runic characters are very conspicuous on all these rocks; and they lie in regions which the Northmen must have visited. Those in Tiverton, especially, lie in the precise neighborhood where we have seen\* that Leif landed, before proceeding up the river; and the habit of the Northmen, of leaving marks on newly-discovered or visited spots, is well known: we have already seen it exemplified in the case of Kingiktorsok. It is, moreover, worthy of attention, that these rocks lie in a region which would be particularly likely to attract the navigator's attention; and that the immediately next striking object beyond, is Mount Hope.† You will acknowledge that these facts tend strongly to confirm the proposition that these inscriptions are the work of the Northmen.

Come, said the doctor, — anxious, as usual, to avoid any direct expression of his opinion, — we are got close to home, though we have walked so slowly; and we seem to have had enough about these inscriptions. But

---

\* Ante, p. 102.

† See *Antiq. Am.* p. 403.

there is one question I must not forget to ask you :—What was it that you were saying this morning about a Northman found at Fall River ?

O, the Northman found at Fall River. Ha! ha! ha! doctor, you have not forgotten that story, then. Well, I really am inclined to think there may be some truth in the idea which I mentioned jocularly this morning.

Pray, give us some account of the matter.

Well, doctor, you know, I suppose, how Fall River lies; just between the extremity of the western arm of Watuppa Ponds, and the extreme eastern point of Mount Hope Bay, where the Taunton River falls into the Bay; just, in fact, about the place where we have seen that the dwellings of the Northmen must have been erected. Well, they were digging into a bank there, some time ago, when they came to a hollow, and, digging on, they found a human skeleton —

But how do you know that it was the skeleton of a Northman ?

Let me proceed with one part at a time. That this body was not that of an Indian was evident, both from the shape of the head and bones of the face, and from the remarkable fact of the remains of metal armor being found upon it. All the flesh was destroyed, excepting under this armor; in those parts the flesh still existed. Round the body was a kind of chain, formed of little brass barrels strung upon a string made of something like catgut. It is stated that the body was found in a sitting posture, but it was not seen by any body who knew any thing about such matters until after it had been dug out, so that there may be some mistake about the attitude. That, however, is immaterial. A quantity of arrow-heads were found near the body. Now you will remember, first, that in this immediate neighborhood were the

habitations of the Northmen ; second, that here there was a great battle fought between the Northmen and the natives ; third, that, in that battle, it is expressly stated that two Northmen were killed ; fourth, that, as we have seen exemplified in the case of Thorstein,\* the Northmen were very particular about the burial of their dead. Putting all things together, I think you will acknowledge the probability of this being the body of one of these slain Northmen.

You do not pretend, then, absolutely to declare that it is so ?

I only say that there seems a rational *probability* that such is the fact.† The skeleton, and all found with it, are still preserved with care. Certain points remain to be shown, by which it will be able to be proved, almost to a certainty, whether or not this is the body of a Northman ; though, if it is not so, it would puzzle a wise man to imagine to whom it can have belonged, for this is certain, that it is not that of an Indian. It must be shown

---

\* See, ante, pp. 143 and 147.

† It is necessary to caution whoever would investigate this subject, with the real aim of discovering *the truth*, against being too ready to jump hastily to the conclusion that every remnant of antiquity in these parts, must necessarily have originated with the Northmen. The proof of the reality of the *discoveries* made by them rests on the internal evidence existing in the manuscript documents already examined. That evidence is *thoroughly conclusive*. Every thing else bearing on the subject is *interesting*, but does not affect the reality and truth of those discoveries. There can be little doubt that the inscriptions mentioned were the work of the Northmen ; still we cannot have that absolute testimony of this being the fact, that we have of the truth of the discoveries themselves. The matter of this skeleton and others, (for others have been found,) requires more cautious investigation still. It would be impossible to determine to whom the skeleton could belong, unless to one of the Northmen.



what kind of armor the Northmen wore ; what kind of ornaments, as belts, &c. were common ; how those were usually buried who had been slain in war ; and various other points. These the Northern Antiquarian Society will doubtless be able easily to answer, and their answer may enable us to determine the point.

Then is this the last of the remains of the Northmen of which you have any account to give ? asked the doctor.

It is, doctor.

The doctor was silent. At length he muttered, half aloud, — Singular, to be sure.

Highly interesting, I think, said Mr. Cassall.

All these parts of the subject require much further attention and investigation, said Mr. Norset. I have no doubt that future researches, both as to the remains already discovered, and as to the discovery of others, will throw great light upon the matter. This has already been seen to be the case with reference to the inscription in the Paradisarhellir, which, as I have before stated, is found to bear directly upon the discovery of the American continent.

Well, well, said the doctor, it's all very well ; I do n't know ; —

What do n't you know, doctor ?

O, I do n't know — nothing at all ; nothing at all.

That is to say, you do n't like to acknowledge that any impression has been made upon you by the evidence, though you feel convinced that it is satisfactory.

Poh ! poh ! nonsense, nonsense.

No nonsense at all. I wonder, doctor, that the very absurdity of such an objection as that implied in the use of Mr. Catlin's name about the Assonet Rock, — which absurdity you, as a man of letters, saw immediately, though nothing overwilling to believe the inscription the

Northmen's work before,—and the facts which I have stated, in reference to that and other inscriptions, should not be sufficient to convince you of the futility of all objections, and to make you acknowledge the high probability of this being the work of the Northmen.

O, it's all very well, sir, said the doctor, hastily; I dare say the Northmen made the Assonet inscription.

You do allow it, then? said Mr. Norset, professing to take the last clause of the doctor's sentence as if said in serious earnest; I thought candor would not allow you to deny it. There can, indeed, be little doubt that such is the fact, when all other evidence is taken and placed by the side of the internal evidence contained in the inscription itself, as compared with other Runic inscriptions. And the Portsmouth and Tiverton rocks, too; there can be little doubt, from the same evidence, as to the fact of their originating in the same source.

But again remember, doctor, what I said this morning, that, whether these inscriptions be or be not the work of the Northmen, it cannot affect, by one jot or tittle, the evidence of the authenticity and truth of the narratives of the discovery and exploration of America by the Northmen, which I have demonstrated to be true by the examination of their own internal evidence. These remains can be nothing more than *corroborative* testimony, though most interesting monuments. They have nothing, in fact, necessarily to do with the proof of those discoveries. The absurdity must then be very evident, of the idea which some people seem to entertain, that the whole history of the discoveries of the Northmen is to be overthrown by weakening the authenticity of the Assonet inscription as the work of the Northmen. A parcel of crude notions, originating chiefly in ignorance, are thus thrown out upon this particular and unfortunate rock,

and these worthy individuals seem to think the work is done.

That is folly. Of course, however, nobody listens to them or believes them.

Yes they do ; and for the simple reason that they themselves know nothing about the matter, and it is impossible, therefore, that they should be able to distinguish this spurious argument from genuine and direct argument. The detailed facts connected with these discoveries, having been hitherto locked up in foreign languages, are not generally known. It is necessarily upon these alone, and not upon any inscription rock, that the whole of the real evidence rests.

Certainly the detailed facts ought to be generally known and examined, in order to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

They should be so, indeed. The discovery of America by the Northmen, in the tenth century, ought to be a topic of at least as much interest as the discovery of the West Indies by Colon, in the fifteenth. We shall find it generally esteemed so one of these days, I doubt not.

I should think so, remarked Mr. Cassall. In fact, I must freely confess that, though I was inclined to ridicule the idea at first, and to imagine all relating to it dull and uninteresting, I have found myself gradually become, not only convinced of the indubitable truth of the facts alleged, but most deeply interested in all the details. New England seems almost to become classic ground, especially the shores of Massachusetts and of Rhode Island. I shall certainly make a pilgrimage to the different spots visited by Northmen in this neighborhood. I do not understand how any one can fail to be interested in a topic of this nature, — the discovery of this great continent, and the first establishment of a connection be-

tween it and Europe. The remains left here by the Northmen add to the interest. These are indeed precious relics, and every care ought to be taken for their preservation.

It will be a disgrace if it is n't, said the doctor, shortly.

So it will, doctor, said Mr. Norset ; and I think, with Mr. Cassall, that it is something like a disgrace to any body not to take any interest in this subject, and not to feel any desire to become acquainted with the facts connected with it.

We have wandered considerably past our door, said the doctor ; shall we now turn back ? We seem to have pretty well concluded the discussion of the deeds and discoveries of the Northmen, and it grows towards evening.

As you please, doctor. And you will not pretend to deny, — though you have thought it necessary to endeavor, in vain alas, to discover flaws and signs of inconsistency at every step, — that you have felt a great interest in all these details of the discoveries and explorations of the Northmen, — in all which has thus opened to us some view and knowledge of AMERICA IN THE OLDEN TIME ?

The doctor, though still unwilling to signify a positive assent, gave that surest sign of acquiescence which is conveyed by silence.

I hope, then, continued Mr. Norset, that you will no longer have any hesitation in declaring your conviction of the authenticity of the records, and of the truth of the narratives, which have been handed down to us, of THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY THE NORTHMEN IN THE TENTH CENTURY.

## A P P E N D I X .

---

### NOTE A.

#### ON THE COMPARATIVE MERITS OF THE NORTHMEN AND COLON (COLUMBUS.)\*

THE influence of habit and education in implanting and fixing ideas in the mind is well known. When these ideas take a direction which tends to gratify any of the predominant feelings, they become still more deeply cherished, and still more difficult to eradicate, however erroneous, and clearly proved erroneous, they may be. Such is the idea which has been almost universally implanted in the minds of men that Colon was the first discoverer of America.† As, in the case of the cardinals who had been educated in the belief that the sun moved round the earth, and who were horror-stricken at the broaching of the contrary idea, so, the most extraordinary reluctance is felt by many to relinquish the idea of Colon's having been the first who opened the new world to European intercourse. It may not be amiss, therefore, to examine, somewhat more in detail than could be done in the body of this volume, the actual merits of that deservedly celebrated navigator, and to compare his merits with those of the Northmen, in order that it may be fairly determined to whom belongs, in truth, the greater real honor, — who was, in truth, the discoverer of America.

Previously to doing this, it will be proper to allude, as briefly as possible, to the remarks of two authors who have made allusions to

---

\* See Preface, and pp. 3, 14, 87, 181, 227, 251, 254, &c. &c.

† See, ante, pp. 12 and 13.

the Northmen, in connection with their statements of the expeditions of Colon. It will be obvious that, although every person anxious to ascertain the real truth will examine the original sources of information for himself, and not rely on the *opinions* of any author, however high his reputation, there must be many who will be led to pause, when they see statements or conclusions made by those who, as they suppose, had every means of information, neither of which they find warranted by such personal examination. It becomes therefore necessary to take some notice of the statements or conclusions contained in the remarks which have been mentioned.

The works to which allusion is made are Irving's "History of the Life, &c. of Columbus," and Bancroft's "History of the United States." The latter shall be first examined.

It would, perhaps, be impossible to find, elsewhere, throughout the range of historical literature, so great a number of errors of statement, in respect of fact and connected circumstance, as are here to be found in the compass of a single page; for let it be understood that these observations have reference only to the remarks of Mr. Bancroft as to the discoveries of the Northmen. These errors and misstatements are the more remarkable, inasmuch as the writer *professes to have access to, and to have consulted, the original authorities on this subject.*

With the design of exhibiting completely the nature of this passage, the author at first took each clause separately, and examined it, at full length, with a view to showing its incorrectness; for it is compelled to be stated that, out of the thirty (or thereabouts) clauses of which the passage consists, there is scarcely one which does not embody a misstatement. A detailed notice of each was prepared, with the intention of insertion here. Upon reconsideration, however, it was found to extend too far, and it was thought that the selection of a few of the more prominent points would be sufficient to show the value of the whole passage, as authority, either for correctness of statement or inference.\* The whole of the original passage shall be copied verbatim from Mr. Bancroft's work, (fourth edition, vol. i. p. 6,) and divided into clauses as at first intended to be noticed. Those clauses which are not noticed in detail, shall be merely designated by the addition "incorrect," or by

---

\* Should it be found necessary, the whole of these notices will be made public on a subsequent occasion.

reference to the passage in the previous pages where the incorrectness will be seen exhibited, or shall be passed over altogether without notice.

“The enterprise of Columbus, <sup>1</sup>the most memorable maritime enterprise in the history of the world, <sup>2</sup>formed between Europe and America the communication which will never cease. <sup>3</sup>The national pride of an Icelandic historian has indeed claimed for his ancestors the glory of having discovered the western hemisphere. <sup>4</sup>It is said that they passed from their own island to Greenland, <sup>5</sup>and were driven by adverse winds from Greenland to the shores of Labrador; <sup>6</sup>that the voyage was often repeated; <sup>7</sup>that the coasts of America were extensively explored; <sup>8</sup>and colonies established on the shores of Nova Scotia or Newfoundland. <sup>9</sup>It is even suggested that these early adventurers anchored near the harbor of Boston, or in the bays of New Jersey; <sup>10</sup>and Danish antiquarians believe that Northmen entered the waters of Rhode Island; <sup>11</sup>inscribed their adventures on the rocks of Taunton River; <sup>12</sup>gave the name of Vinland to the southeast coasts of New England; <sup>13</sup>and explored the inlets of our country as far as Carolina. <sup>14</sup>But the story of the colonization of America by Northmen rests on narratives mythological in form, <sup>15</sup>and obscure in meaning; <sup>16</sup>ancient, yet not contemporary. <sup>17</sup>The chief document is an interpolation in the history of Sturleson, <sup>18</sup>whose zealous curiosity could hardly have neglected the discovery of a continent. <sup>19</sup>The geographical details are too vague to sustain a conjecture; <sup>20</sup>the accounts of the mild winter and fertile soil are, on any modern hypothesis, fictitious or exaggerated; <sup>21</sup>the description of the natives applies only to the Esquimaux, inhabitants of hyperborean regions; <sup>22</sup>the remark which should define the length of the shortest winter's day has received interpretations adapted to every latitude from New York to Cape Farewell; <sup>23</sup>and Vinland has been sought in all directions, from Greenland and the St. Lawrence to Africa. <sup>24</sup>The nation of intrepid mariners, whose voyages extended beyond Iceland and beyond Sicily, <sup>25</sup>could easily have sailed from Greenland to Labrador; <sup>26</sup>no clear historic evidence establishes the natural probability that they accomplished the passage.”

<sup>1</sup> This is denied: see subsequent argument.

<sup>2</sup> Five hundred years after the *Northmen* had established the same.

<sup>3</sup> This is intended, of course, as an insinuation against the credit due to the work of such a man. On this subject it may be observed,

that it must indeed be an extraordinary kind of *national pride* which should enable any man to compose an account of the discovery of a country, four hundred years before that discovery was really made, in which account that country is accurately described, and circumstances and facts stated which could *only* have occurred if that account were true, but which *must* have occurred if that account were true:—this would be much more extraordinary than the fact of those discoveries themselves. Particular attention is here requested to the observations on this subject, ante, pp. 28, 80, 81, and 97. The only meaning which can be possibly really attached to this argument or insinuation is this: that the *more opportunities* and means a man has for becoming acquainted with the facts which he narrates, the *less* is his narrative to be credited. Thus, the history of the discoveries of the Northmen was first published, *as compiled from original records, still in existence*, by Torfi, (Torfæus,) a Northman; *ergo*, that history is unworthy of credit;—the history of the Peloponnesian war was written by Thucydides, a Greek; *ergo*, that history is unworthy of credit;—the “Annals of Rome” were written by Tacitus, a Roman; *ergo*, those Annals are unworthy of credit;—the history of England has been written by Dr. Lingard, an Englishman; *ergo*, that history is unworthy of credit;—the history of the United States has been written by Mr. Bancroft, an American; *ergo*, that history is unworthy of credit. Be it observed, this is Mr. Bancroft’s logic, not the author’s.

<sup>4</sup> The fact that the Northmen passed from Iceland to Greenland more than *eight centuries and a half ago*, (thus, in fact, sojourning in the western hemisphere,) is at least as certain an historical fact as that the Pilgrim fathers ever landed at Plymouth. Whoever doubts the former fact will be no less unreasonable if he doubts the *existence* of either Iceland or Greenland.

<sup>5</sup> Wholly incorrect. Nowhere thus even hinted. See, for real facts, ante, p. 71, &c. &c.

<sup>6</sup> Necessarily, the last being incorrect, incorrect also.

<sup>7</sup> Incorrect.

<sup>8</sup> As to first part, see p. 123; latter part, wholly incorrect.

<sup>10</sup> Misrepresentation: *Danish antiquarians have published the original records.*

<sup>11</sup> Incorrect, in fact; see pp. 317, 321, 322, 326.

<sup>12</sup> Incorrect.

<sup>14</sup> What kind of a *story* this is, has been shown, ante, pp. 28, 80, 81, 97, &c.; and see answer to 3.



So far from being "*mythological in form*," these narratives, as every reader of the previous pages must have perceived, *are remarkable for their straight-forward, unostentatious simplicity*. This stands so much in contrast to any thing in the shape of mythological, as to have attracted the attention, *in the way of contrast*, of an impartial, but very competent writer. See, ante, latter part of note, p. 8. Moreover, it is the fact, as noticed, ante, pp. 33, 55, and 257, that *ALL the prominent names appearing in these narratives, as actors, are those of individuals well known in the external history of the times*. There is not the remotest approach, either in style, in subject matter, or in event, to any thing mythological. There are no marvellous catastrophes, or superhuman achievements. The whole is a simple, natural, unadorned recital of events, carrying in its very simplicity evidence of its truth. Even the allusions to superstitions introduced, are free from any thing mythological. They describe only what is known to have existed and been practised among the people to whom the whole refers. The ruins in Greenland, and the inscriptions at Kingiktorsoak, &c. must, of course, be considered "*mythological in form*," if these narratives are so. It is difficult to conceive that these narratives can have been perused by any one who can write thus, and as follows, of them: It would be well if modern histories were characterized by the same simplicity of style which so strongly marks them, and in which they differ so much from the style of Mr. Bancroft's own historical narrative.

<sup>15</sup> The clear simplicity, instead of obscurity, of the narratives, has been already noticed, and must be obvious to every reader.

<sup>16</sup> It is here seen that the *antiquity of the records* is not ventured to be impeached. (See, ante, pp. 25, 26, 27, and 54.) This being admitted, the objection involves a contradiction. (See answer to 3, and, ante, pp. 28, 80, 81, 97, &c.) The credit of the narratives is attempted to be impeached by saying that they are "not contemporary." It has been already shown (see, ante, p. 22, also note B) that they are, *in fact*, contemporary, — the justness and correctness of which proposition and argument is clearly evident from the facts stated in answer to 3, and in pp. 28, 80, 81, 97, &c.

<sup>17</sup> This is wholly, and in every part, a misrepresentation and misstatement. See note, ante, p. 254. The perusal of a single page of the Preface \* to the *Antiq. Am.* is alone sufficient to prove such

---

\* See *Præf. Antiq. Am.* pp. vii. and viii.

to be the case. The "chief document"—which is *legion*, for there are many equally important—is not found at all in the pages of Sturluson, (always called, by his countrymen and other authors, *Snorri Sturluson*.) The documents relating to these expeditions are found in works totally distinct from the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson. (See, ante, pp 51—54.) Of a large portion of the events detailed in these documents, no mention is made in any edition of the *Heimskringla*. Mr. Bancroft learned, from the pages of the *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANÆ* ITSELF,\* that one passage which has appeared in some of the editions of the *Heimskringla*, relating to these discoveries, was most probably not inserted by Snorri himself, but was copied from the original and distinct records of those discoveries which still exist,—and which are published in the *Antiq. Am.*—and inserted by a later hand. The candor of the "Danish Antiquarians" may here be contrasted with that of Mr. Bancroft. The *Heimskringla* relates to events totally distinct and different from these discoveries; and it is therefore suggested by the *Danish Antiquarians*, that Snorri did not insert this passage in his history. The authorities for these discoveries are as ancient and as authentic as, though distinct from, the *Heimskringla*. It is especially worthy of observation, however, that a passage *does occur*, in a portion of Snorri's work of which he was the undoubted and undisputed author, in which distinct mention is made of *Vinland*, and of *Leif Eirekson's expedition thither*.†

<sup>18</sup> The *Heimskringla* consists of a *History of the kings of Norway*. The discoveries of the Northmen in Greenland, and other parts of the western hemisphere, do not therefore belong in any way to its subject. A man may go out of his way to relate facts disconnected with his subject; but it does not follow that those facts should never have existed because he does not do so. As noticed, however, under 17, "the discovery of the continent" of North America did not escape the "zealous curiosity" of Snorri Sturluson. He distinctly mentions it in a portion of his work of undoubted and undisputed authenticity, and precisely in the manner which was to be expected; namely, in a passing allusion to Leif Eirekson, who appears briefly in the history of Olaf Tryggvason, and who was closely connected with the discovery of *Vinland*. (See, ante, pp. 89 and 114.)

<sup>19</sup> The geographical details are clear, precise, and distinct, though

\* See *Antiq. Am.* p. 6.

† See *Antiq. Am.* p. 193.

brief; many incidental allusions occurring to render them more precise and definite. (See, e. g. pp. 71, 75, 77, 80, 166, 167, 281, &c. &c.) It is impossible for any one who examines them, even hastily, to look at them as vague. Mr. Bancroft's pages have themselves been more than once quoted to prove the preciseness of these details. (See pp. 120 and 281.) This objection may well be placed by the side of that alluded to on p. 95, ante, of *too great accuracy*. The two compared, will serve to show how wise men may differ in their opinions on the same subject. (See also, as before, answer to 3, pp. 28, 80, 81, and 97.)

<sup>20</sup> Wholly incorrect. (See pp. ante, 104, &c. and 189, &c.)

<sup>21</sup> What would be thought of any foreigner who was, upon hearing a description of the inhabitants of the United States at the present day, to say that he did not believe there was such a people living there, for "the description of the inhabitants applies only to the English, inhabitants of an island, far off, to the northwest of Europe?" Yet that objection would be exactly corresponding in argument to, though more rational on many accounts than, the one here advanced. Does it follow that, because the Esquimaux are now found only in the northern regions of the American continent, they should never have been found in more southern regions of the *same continent*? On the contrary, is it not very *probable* that a change in their habitations may have taken place in the course of nine centuries? Strong evidence exists, independently of the Icelandic documents, which goes to prove that such change has actually taken place, and that the same race did actually, at some former period, inhabit regions still more southward than Vinland.\* In addition to all this, it is not granted that these descriptions of the natives do, *necessarily*, apply only to the Esquimaux. Of that the reader of these pages can judge for himself.

<sup>22</sup> This, and the following clause, would seem to have been penned rather with reference to the composition of a well-rounded sentence, than with reference to fact. *Neither of them has the slightest foundation in fact*. The remark alluded to, (see, ante, p. 107,) has *never* received an interpretation, by any Icelandic scholar,

---

\* The fact itself, that the colonies in Greenland were harassed, during the latter period of their existence, by the incursions of the natives, looks very much as if some northward migration had taken place. It would seem, also, from the mention, in several of the geographical notices of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, of the Skrælings dwelling in Helluland, (see, ante, p. 261,) that the Icelanders were aware of their change of residence.

adapted either to New York or Cape Farewell. The mention of the latter point indeed involves an absurdity, which it is wonderful that the writer did not perceive. It involves the absurdity of supposing the narrator to say that the day and night were of more equal length in Greenland than in Greenland! The Icelandic or Greenland writer is guilty of no such absurdity. This remark has received *two* interpretations, both mentioned in the previous pages, (ante, p. 107, &c.) where the correct elucidation is given, and the cause of the error exhibited. Both the latitude of Newfoundland, (see Thormod Torfi [*Torfæus*] and his *copyists*.) and that of Rhode Island, (see Pall Vidalin, Finn Jonsson,\* *Antiq. Am.*, Wheaton, Henderson, &c. &c.) lie at a considerable distance from either Cape Farewell or New York. Rhode Island is, without any doubt, the correct locality.

<sup>23</sup> This is the only instance, in the whole of this passage, in which any reference is given in support of any assertion; and it is not a little remarkable that the references here given prove, each one of them, the *total incorrectness* of the assertion made, and prove the *direct opposite* to that assertion to have been the fact. See this noticed fully in note to p. 227, ante. Vinland has never yet been placed, or sought, or supposed to have existed, in either Greenland or Africa. It has been sought and supposed to have existed in two situations only; one of which can be clearly shown to be erroneous, and the other has been proved to be correct. (See answer to 22, also pp. 77, 81, &c. 84, &c. 98, &c. 109, and chaps. ii. and iii. *passim*.) Each of the authorities cited by Mr. B. assigns to Vinland *precisely the same situation* as is assigned to it by the descriptions contained in each of the narratives translated in this volume. Those authorities afford thus a remarkable confirmation of the truth of those narratives. They will presently be referred to more particularly, and one of them translated at full length. The passage from Adam of Bremen (ante, p. 37) must, it is presumed, have been forgotten, or considered, with Dr. Dubital, to be an interpolation, by the writer of this clause.

---

\* The first of these authors *died* in 1727, the other in 1789. Their elucidation was not, therefore, made for the purpose of favoring the "belief" of the "Danish Antiquarians," who first published their "belief" in 1837. The elucidation of these learned men, which, as before stated, (p. 108,) is the one in which the great majority of Icelandic scholars are agreed, was made *without any reference* to the position of Vinland, or to the expeditions and discoveries of the Northmen. It is, therefore, perfectly impartial.

<sup>24</sup> Very incomplete. (See, ante, pp. 64 and 309.)

<sup>25</sup> They *could*; (see, ante, pp. 20 and 21;) and that fact should have made the writer hesitate, before denying, in such sweeping terms, the truth of the contents of all the authentic documents recording that they *did do* much about the same as what he himself acknowledges that they "could easily" have done.

<sup>26</sup> This is the writer's *assertion*.\* If the external evidence of authentic history is nothing; if the known existing facts of the present day are nothing; if internal evidence of truth, existing in every line of the recording documents, is nothing; if incidental coincidences, discovered in the statement of every fact of importance, are nothing; if the confirmation drawn from reference to other documents of undoubted authenticity, but distinct in authors, country, and age, is nothing; if all human testimony is nothing; and the doctrines of Pyrrho, and the mode of argument adopted in the "Historical Doubts" (ante, p. 23) are sound and just;—then, indeed, is that assertion well-founded and correct.

The remarks on the same subject, contained in Mr. Irving's "Columbus," must be next examined. That examination will, it is hoped, be a more grateful task to the reader, as it has been to the author, than the one which has been just concluded. Mr. Irving neither *professes to have had*, nor is it possible that he could have had, access to the original documents before the publication of his valuable and interesting work. But, notwithstanding this, we do not find him making any egregious errors in statement, or dogmatically declaring that the facts alleged are untrue, because they might seem to affect the truth of ideas which habit and education had implanted. His remarks are judicious, *considering the means of information which he had*; and, though he errs in his apprehension of the facts, that error is plainly owing only to the same cause,—want of access to the true fountain-head of information. There are no remarks made on this subject, in the "History of Columbus," which do discredit to the judgment or candor of the highly talented and deservedly much admired author of that work. At the same time, since errors *do exist* in his apprehension of the facts, and, *consequently*, in the inferences drawn from them,

---

\* The remarkable manner in which Mr. Bancroft contradicts himself in the same work, only two pages further on, has been already pointed out in note to p 239.

it is proper that those statements and inferences should be here alluded to and examined.

The remarks made by Mr. Irving on this subject, occur in the Appendix to his "History of the Life, &c. of Columbus," No. xiv. In that article Mr. Irving gives a statement of some of the facts connected with the discovery of the continent of North America. That statement, however, contains several errors, being taken only from Forster's Northern Voyages; it is indeed expressly added by Mr. Irving:—"The author of the present work has not had the means of tracing this story to its original sources. He gives it on the authority of M. Malte Brun and Mr. Forster." Thus Mr. Irving's knowledge of the facts was derived only from *fourth-rate* sources, and not from any inspection of the actual records themselves. It is not wonderful, therefore, that he should be inclined to doubt the authenticity of the facts. It thus only becomes further evident how necessary it is that these original documents should be made public, so that all may have access immediately to them, and be enabled to examine directly into the internal evidences of truth which they exhibit. Had Mr. Irving been enabled thus to do, it is most probable that he would not have spoken of the "mysterious Vinland," nor have doubted of the perfect truth of the accounts of the "voyages of the Scandinavians."

It is added to the above remarks,— "Forster appears to have no doubt of the authenticity of the facts. As far as the author of the present work has had experience in tracing these stories of early discoveries of portions of the new world, he has generally found them very confident deductions, drawn from very vague and questionable facts," &c.; and he alludes to the idle stories of St. Borondon, and the Island of the Seven Cities. It will immediately be obvious that these remarks originated only in the same want of reference to the original documents. Under such circumstances they are not unnatural. A glance, however, at the actual contents of those documents, which are presented to the reader in this volume, and at the accounts of the isles of St. Borondon and of the Seven Cities, will suffice to show the total diversity of the two cases. In the case of the latter, there are *no documents at all*; nothing exists but rumors alluded to by various historians of Europe. In these rumors the *internal evidence* is directly opposed to the probability of their truth, and no coincidences, geographical or otherwise, exist. In the latter part of the first chapter of the present work, (p. 40, &c.) the story of Plato's Atlantis, and the other

allusions to an extra-European continent to the westward, among the ancients, are examined and shown to have no semblance, in point of evidence of authenticity, to the accounts contained in the documents here detailed. The stories of St. Borondon, the Isles of the Seven Cities, &c. &c. rest upon a still more sandy foundation than do these allusions among the ancients. In the case of the "voyages of the Scandinavians," however, we have no *loose rumors*, or "*deductions drawn* from very vague and questionable facts;" but, on the contrary, we have simple, unadorned narrations of the transactions themselves; the whole free from ostentation or art, and characterized by a straight-forward plainness and simplicity:— there is no attempt to impose a tale of wonders on the reader's imagination; but we have a brief narrative of unvarnished facts, told in a strain of conscious truth:— there is no monstrous relation of marvellous adventures which are adverse to all probability; but there is a detail given of facts, which carry in themselves the air of truth, and which bear on their very face marks of the highest probability:— there is no contradiction between these relations and other known facts, and all external and internal evidence; but there is a strict harmony in all the parts of the narrative with the facts of known authentic history;— while all external evidence testifies to the authenticity of the documents, and all internal evidence testifies to the same point, and to the truth of the narratives contained in those documents;— in addition to which, there are *incidental allusions*, in several ancient works of acknowledged authenticity, to facts narrated in detail in these documents, which allusions can only be accounted for on the supposition of the authenticity and truth of these documents and narratives. All these points have been sufficiently discussed and proved in the previous pages. (See chap. i. *passim*.)

Thus much for any similitude between the history of the discoveries of the Northmen and the tales of St. Borondon, &c. Mr. Irving alludes also to the alleged voyages of the Zeni. It is nothing whatever to the present question whether they be true or false. They only profess to have been made in the latter part of the fourteenth century, four centuries after the discoveries of the Northmen. The accounts of them are, however, wanting in those evidences of truth which exist so strongly in the case of the narratives of the discoveries of the Northmen. (See, ante, p. 233.)

Mr. Irving, however, candidly allows, — "There is no great improbability, however, that such enterprising and roving voyagers as

the Scandinavians may have wandered to the northern shores of America, &c.; and, if the Icelandic manuscripts, said to be of the thirteenth century, can be relied upon as genuine, free from modern interpolation and correctly quoted, they *would appear to prove the fact.*" It has been seen that these manuscripts *still exist* of the date alleged, and of course interpolation is therefore impossible. (See, pp. 26, &c. 54, 97, &c.) "*But,*" continues Mr. Irving, *having had no means of inspecting these documents, and ascertaining their contents,* "but, granting the truth of the alleged discoveries, they led to no more result than would the interchange of communication between the natives of Greenland and the Esquimaux. The knowledge of them appears not to have extended beyond their own nation, and to have been soon neglected and forgotten by themselves." Several suggestions rise in answer to these remarks.

First,—they did lead to more results than those thus stated. (See pp. 289 and 290.) Greenland, and Iceland were colonized, being a part of these discoveries. Greenland is certainly much more a part of America and the western hemisphere, than any region of the West Indies; and Iceland is certainly as much an American island as St. Domingo. The colonies of Greenland and Iceland were very important ones, on account of literature, trade, fisheries, &c.; they were, in fact, as valuable to Norway by commercial intercourse, and more so, in truth, than the Indies ever really were to Spain. That the operations of nature and other causes, over which the settlers could have no control, caused the destruction of the colony in Greenland *after it had existed in a flourishing condition for nearly five centuries,* (thus being far from being *soon forgotten*) does not affect the question. It was, in fact, the memory of the former colonies which caused *fresh colonies* to be established in 1721, so that the intercourse between America and Europe,—the western and eastern hemispheres, — *has never been forgotten,* even though Iceland be left out of the question.

Second,—it is by no means clear that a colony was not established in the more southern regions of North America, namely, in Vinland, the present New England; (pp. 231 and 232.) It is *certain* that the Northmen resided in that region for several years, (p. 209;) that they had intercourse with that and the neighboring regions during several subsequent centuries, (pp. 229, 234, 236, &c.;) and that the facts of their visits and explorations were not forgotten, but entered into the general stock of knowledge of the age; were recorded in accurate traditions subsequently committed to writing; and



specified in the geographical treatises of all subsequent times. *They were recorded also by the writers of other nations*, as witness the quotation from Adam of Bremen, (p. 36.)

Third, — at least one individual is known to have been born in this Vinland, (present State of Mass.) during the residence of the Northmen here, (p. 177,) the ancestor of a long line of celebrated characters. At least one *other* must have been born in Vinland, since it is stated of Freydis (p. 194) that she was unable to fly from the Skrælings on account of the state of her health. That cause was pregnancy, (Antiq. Am. p. 154,) and, as Thorfinn's company remained in Vinland at least a year after that time, Freydis must, before their departure, have given birth to a child.

Fourth, — it is probable as before stated, (p. 14,) that Colon's own idea of reaching land, — *Asia as he always imagined*, — by crossing the western ocean, received its chief confirmation during his visit to Iceland. For Colon's own words, with reference to his visit to Iceland, see Irving's "History," &c. b. i. ch. 6. On this subject some important observations have been made by Professor *Finn Magnussen*, which leave the fact of Colon's visit to Iceland a matter of which there can be no possible doubt, and render it *almost certain* that he must have seen and conversed with those capable of informing him with respect to lands in the west. (See Antiq. Am. note. Præf. xxiv.) He would of course allow the facts stated to favor his favorite idea only, and would still imagine the lands described to be a part of the eastern coast of Asia. It is known that his idea was first broached to Paulo Toscanelli of Florence, in 1474. He went to Iceland in 1477; and this idea then filled his mind, and would be certain to be uttered in conversation with the learned there, which would induce them to narrate some accounts of the western lands known to them. It was soon after his return from Iceland that his expedition was first proposed.

Fifth, — the *result* of an action is by no means always the sure criterion by which to judge of its merit; though, even judging by *results*, the expeditions of the Northmen become at least as remarkable as those of Colon. (See observation *first*.) The reasons why the discoveries of the Northmen did not become *generally known to Europe*, (they were known to, and recorded by, European authors, Adam of Bremen, &c.) have been already shown, (pp. 12, 13.) But it must necessarily have happened, as in fact it *has happened*, in the progress of events, that the records of those discoveries would be made public, and expeditions be again made in quest of the lands

mentioned. This would obviously have occurred long ago by others, if Colon himself had not acted on the hints given. The publication of Torfœus, in 1705, would have aroused the enterprise of all Europe. It is worthy of observation, also, that the greatest good that has resulted in these latter days, from the discovery of America, has resulted, and now exists, not in the West Indies, or in the regions on the continent of America casually touched but not settled by Colon, but in the very regions discovered and inhabited by the Northmen. Are not the United States of North America, and, it may perhaps be said, especially New England and the immediately neighboring parts, of more importance in the world's scale, — do they not hold a higher rank, — are they not more advanced in civilization, science, and the arts, than all the rest of the continent of America, north and south, and all the Indies, east and west, put together? The United States, New England in particular, were discovered and explored and inhabited by the *Northmen* five centuries before the time of Colon; and it has been by a race of North blood, and not of Spanish blood, that these United States have been colonized, and settled, and raised to their present position.

The whole of these remarks will have served to render it obvious how necessary it is, in order to arrive at a just conclusion as to the reality and nature of the discoveries of the Northmen, that the actual records themselves of those discoveries should be examined. This the present volume will, for the first time, afford the means of being done by all.

Let the attention be now more especially directed to the examination of the comparative merits of the Northmen and of Colon. In treating briefly of this subject two points shall be considered: first, the merit attending the act of discovery; and, second, the correctness of the ideas entertained by the discoverers of the nature of their discovery.

First, — as to the merit attending the act of discovery. This must be determined by an examination of the general circumstances surrounding each party, and of the mode in which the discoveries, or expeditions, were made.

What, then, were the general circumstances attending each party? In the case of Colon, the age in which he lived was one of high excitement, on account of discoveries recently made: ambition and avarice both operated as strong stimulants to adventurous enterprise. Colon had attained the idea (how, will be presently examined) that he could reach Asia by a short westward passage. Art and science were in an advanced condition; the compass and the quadrant

had been invented, and nautical skill highly cultivated and exercised. The historian of Colon justly observes, (Irving's "Life," &c. b. i. ch. vii.)—"The application of the astrolabe [quadrant] to navigation, was the one thing wanting to facilitate an intercourse across the deep; and it *divested the enterprise of Columbus of that hazardous character*, which was so great an obstacle to its accomplishment. *It was immediately after this event that he proposed his voyage of discovery to the crown of Portugal.*" Colon, with all these advantages, and with the favor of princes, for, — though he persevered long, and struggled with many difficulties in the attempt to gain this, yet he *did not undertake his enterprise till he had attained it*, — undertook his expedition. He crossed the Atlantic, touching at the Canaries, and he reached Guanahani, or San Salvador. Colon made three subsequent voyages; discovered and coasted many other of the West India Isles, and barely touched on a small portion of the coast of America, about Honduras, which, however, he did not explore, and never again visited. A settlement was established in St. Domingo. Now this is all, whatever may be said, that Colon did. He never reached the land of which he went in search. It is not intended to detract from his merit, — for his merit as an intrepid mariner was great, — but to present his acts in a fair comparative light. Had it not been for the favor of princes, Colon's enterprise would never, in all probability, have been undertaken. Had it not been for the advance of science, his enterprise would never have been undertaken. This is undeniable.

Now what did the Northmen do? In the first place, not one of their discoveries or expeditions was made under the favor of princes or men in power. They were entirely undertaken on *private means and enterprise alone*. *The Northmen had not the compass, or the quadrant. They had not the advantages of the advance of science*, either in the structure of their vessels, or in the arrangements and fittings for their expeditions. Yet Iceland was discovered and settled in the *ninth century*. (See p. 58.) And, though Iceland is not the same number of leagues distant from Norway that the West Indies are from Spain, yet it is, to all intents and purposes, as distant: the broad ocean must be crossed, — an ocean at least as unknown and dangerous to the Northmen as the broad Atlantic was to Colon. This ocean was crossed, and the distant island settled by the Northmen, nearly ten centuries ago; and how settled? not in the hope of gain, not in the greedy search for gold, but in the noble aspiration of the soul for liberty and freedom. The Norwe-

gians fled from the tyranny of native princes, and sought that distant and comparatively desolate island as their home for freedom. A century later, one of themselves, involved, through the spirit of the times, in trouble, and compelled to quit the country, instead of returning to the shores of Europe, and hiding his head in ignoble obscurity, boldly determined to seek a new home in unknown lands still farther west, still unexplored. Eirek the Red landed on the shores of America, in Greenland, A. D. 982, (ante, p. 61, &c.) Let us see what the spirit which actuated him was. He did not, immediately that the land was found to be habitable, sit down, content that he had found a home. *He himself spent two whole years in carefully exploring the land*, (see p. 63,) and then returned to Iceland to proclaim his discovery. Though the offence for which he was compelled to quit Iceland was then pardoned, and he might have remained in his former home in peace, he determined to return to Greenland, and fix there his habitation. He did so in 985, many others accompanying him. He made the land the refuge of the distressed, and raised it to an important colony. The explorations of the Northmen were continued, as has been seen, (pp. 64 and 309,) into the extreme northern regions. In the discovery of Greenland it is utterly impossible for any one to deny that the western hemisphere was discovered, explored, and inhabited by the Northmen; and the purposes and ends of that discovery were nobler, and the circumstances attending it far more striking, perilous, and adventurous, than were those attending any of the discoveries of Colon and the Spaniards. But the discoveries of the Northmen did not end here; although, as thus far made, and with all their disadvantages, they *EXCEEDED, both in extent explored, and in distance from their native home*, all the discoveries ever made by Colon, and all the settlements effected by him. Land was discovered to the south of Greenland by Biarni Heriulfson. Did the Northmen rest satisfied with simple knowledge of the fact of land existing there? No! It is expressly recorded, (see p. 88,) that, when Biarni went to Norway and related the circumstances of his voyage, — which, be it observed, was a much more lengthened voyage than *any ever made by Colon*, (see, ante, p. 87,) — much interest was excited, *and he was much blamed for not having explored with greater care the newly-discovered lands*. The distance and the danger did not terrify his countrymen. Others of them determined to explore the land. They went out, with no magnified hopes of gain, without princely favor, urged by the desire of *exploring* other lands, where, perhaps,

colonies and habitations might be settled,—not for the sake of the *gold* which was there produced, but for the means of freely exercising the powers with which nature had endowed them, which would be there afforded. *Leif Eirekson* (pp. 88 and 92) undertook the first exploring expedition. He crossed the ocean between Greenland and Newfoundland,—to him an unknown, trackless depth,—boldly pursued his course, exploring each land as he went, and observing the qualities of the country; and finally landed and remained, for a full year, in Vinland. He carried home a cargo,—of what?—of *timber*, an article most essential to the real comfort and welfare of his native colony. But the explorations of the land did not cease here. Even *Leif* was considered (ante, p. 116) to have “*too little explored the land*,” and *Thorvald*, his brother, determines to pursue the explorations. He did so. We have unfortunately lost the full details of his expedition, since he lost his life in the course of it; but we do know that he explored the whole coast of North America, from Newfoundland to Florida, or nearly so; sending and accompanying expeditions *for the express and sole purpose of exploration*; and residing in Vinland for three full years. But even this did not satisfy the Northmen. *Thorstein Eirekson* determined to follow his brother. He did so, but was driven by tempest on to another coast, and died there. Nowise dispirited, however, the wife of *Thorstein* urged her second husband to undertake the expedition; and the shores of the continent south of Greenland were yet again explored by *Thorfinn* and his companions, who went out with a determination of forming a settlement. They carefully explored the coast, *and also the interior*, (see p. 201, note,) and resided there for *three years*, until they found that the great numbers of the hostile natives rendered the stay of their small number unsafe. Of course this was a circumstance which they could not control. Some, if not all, returned. It is probable that a part remained, whom *Freydis* and her husband, with *Helgi* and *Finnbogi*, subsequently joined,—*Freydis* returning after a year's residence there. It is known and certain, at any rate, that the country continued to be *visited*, (p. 229,) and that *Bishop Eirek* went there in 1121; as also that *Markland* [Nova Scotia] was visited by merchant-ships for timber, for many centuries later.

Can any one hesitate to acknowledge that, on the one hand, the circumstances attending the discoveries of the Northmen were *morè* unfavorable and more perilous than those attending the expeditions of *Colon*; or that, on the other hand, the mode in which the

expedition and discoveries made by the former were pursued, was more complete and satisfactory than that in which the expeditions of the latter were made?

Many circumstances render the expeditions of the Northmen, at first sight, less imposing than those of Colon. The narrative of them is simple and brief; we have no details of all the anxieties and cares, the difficulties, troubles, disasters, and distresses, of the hardy navigators, to harrow up the feelings, and excite the sympathies. Yet these must have been present to them, in a degree far exceeding any that attended Colon. Imagine Biarni, returning to Iceland, expecting to meet there a father's welcome, and to find shelter from his sea-worn cares under the parental roof. His father was gone, — gone he knew not whither, save that it was to a strange land, far in the westward ocean. But he boldly determined to follow him. For days and weeks, aye, even months, was he tossed by tempest on the waste of waters; borne through trackless depths, of which, before, the existence had been unconceived; and carried within sight of regions of which, before, no European had ever dreamed. What must not have been the hardships which he underwent? We have some hints at the discontent and complaints of his seamen, (p. 73,) though the details are so brief. And were all the expeditions of Leif, Thorvald, Thorstein, Thorfinn, and the others, without peril and disaster? Did not Thorvald lose his life? Was not Thorstein tossed by tempest, and carried to a distant shore, where disease and death awaited him? Did not Thorfinn meet with discontent and mutiny, when Thorhall and others deserted? and did not famine and starvation stare him in the face during a whole winter's residence at Straumfiord? And did not contests with the natives endanger the lives and safety of his company? And did not Biarni Grimolfson perish on his return, and find a grave only in the ocean's depth? (See p. 203.) Here, surely, were perils, and dangers, and disasters, equal to any which awaited Colon; and how many others must there not have been, of whose presence no record has been kept? Yet the enterprise and ardor of the Northmen continued unabated. "Expeditions to Vinland still continued topics of frequent consideration, for that expedition was accounted both lucrative and honorable," (p. 229;) *honorable*, because of the perils and dangers which attended it.

Let the same point, of comparative merit, be now discussed with reference to the correctness of the ideas entertained by the discoverers, of the nature of their discovery.

A few words first as to the *immediate results* of the discoveries. Colon established a settlement at St. Domingo. *Gold, gold, gold*, seems to have been the only object of all the Spanish expeditions, settlements, and hopes. The sad history of the Spanish settlements needs not to be followed. The Northmen founded flourishing colonies,—the cradles of freedom, independence, commerce, and LITERATURE,—in Iceland and Greenland. Iceland became the seat of learning, and of the purest government which, perhaps, ever existed. She remains, to this day, identical in race, language, and manners, with her condition as at first settled; and, though she has, at various times, suffered, from the operations, of nature, the most terrible calamities, she still exists, and exhibits, perhaps, a purer general moral and intellectual atmosphere than is exhibited throughout the world besides. Greenland became the seat of a most important colony. Authentic records tell us that in Eastbygd there were *one hundred and ninety settlements*, and in Westbygd, *ninety*.<sup>\*</sup> Probably before the desertion of the land, the number had increased. The cause of that desertion has been already noticed, (p. 236.) The colonies in Greenland were at as great a distance from Norway as the colonies in the West Indies were from Spain. Had not their desertion taken place, Vinland and other portions of the American continent would have been held in constant intercourse from that land, and Colon's enterprise,—a great and noble one beyond a doubt, but which originated in error, and *failed* in its object,—have held now its proper place in the estimation of mankind.

In order to ascertain the ideas actually entertained by Colon of his discoveries, we need have recourse only to the pages of his ablest historian, Irving, in whose admirable work is embodied all of interest or importance or authority which relates to the modern western navigator. The task of ascertaining the same facts with reference to the Northmen will not be so easy, but it may be done by the careful examination and comparison of different passages and works.

The ideas entertained by Colon shall be quoted from Mr. Irving's own abridgment † of his larger work, in order that the whole may be given in that author's own words. "He set it down as a fundamental principle, that the earth was a terraqueous globe, which

---

\* See Antiq. Am. p. 300, ex Grœnlandiæ vetere Chorographia.

† In the "Family Library," No. xi.

might be travelled round from east to west, and that men stood foot to foot on opposite points. The circumference from east to west, at the equator, he divided, according to Ptolemy, into 24 hours of 15 degrees each, making 360 degrees. Of these he imagined, comparing the globe of Ptolemy with the earlier map of Marinus of Tyre, that fifteen hours had been known to the ancients, extending from the Canary, or Fortunate Islands, to the city of Thineæ in Asia, the western and eastern extremities of the known world. The Portuguese had advanced the western frontier one hour more, by the discovery of the Azore and Cape de Verde Islands: still about eight hours, or one third of the circumference of the earth, remained to be explored. This space he imagined to be occupied, in a great measure, by the eastern regions of Asia, which might extend so far as to approach the western shores of Europe and Africa: A navigator, therefore, by pursuing a direct course from east to west, must arrive at the extremity of Asia, or discover any intervening land. The great obstacle to be apprehended, was from the tract of ocean that might intervene; but this could not be very wide, if the opinion of Alfraganus, the Arabian, were admitted, who, by diminishing the size of the degrees, gave to the earth a smaller circumference than was assigned to it by other cosmographers,—a theory to which Columbus seems generally to have given much faith.\* “The grand argument which induced him to his enterprise was, that the most eastern part of Asia known to the ancients, could not be separated from the Azores by more than a third of the circumference of the globe; that the intervening space must, in a great measure, be filled up by the unknown residue of Asia; and that, as the circumference of the world was less than was generally supposed, the Asiatic shores could easily be attained by a moderate voyage to the west. It is singular how much the success of this great enterprise depended upon two happy errors,—the imaginary extent of Asia to the east, and the supposed smallness of the earth;—both errors of the most learned and profound philosophers, *but without which, Columbus would hardly have ventured into the western regions of the Atlantic, in whose unknown, and perhaps immeasurable, waste of waters he might perish before he could reach a shore.*”† “*He died in ignorance of the real grandeur of his discovery! Until his last breath, he entertained the idea that he had merely opened a new way to the old resorts of*

\* P. 14.

† Ib. p. 18.



*opulent commerce, and had discovered some of the wild regions of the east. He supposed Hispaniola to be the ancient Ophir, which had been visited by the ships of king Solomon, and that Cuba and Terra Firma were but remote parts of Asia."* \*

Thus, then, it is plain that Colon never had the remotest idea of the real nature of the land he had discovered. It has been seen that he did not explore the land so extensively or carefully as the Northmen. It is now seen that he *knew not* that it was an unknown land. *Colon never conceived, or inferred, or reasoned, or imagined, that any unknown land lay in the western ocean, though there seems to be a kind of vague general idea that he did so conceive, or infer, or reason, or imagine.* He went upon erroneous principles, and he arrived at an erroneous conclusion, namely, that *Asia, those parts of it known to the ancients, lay within a comparatively short distance of Europe.* It does not in the slightest degree affect the question that there did *happen to lie* another and distinct continent in the western ocean, upon which he happened to touch. He went out to seek *Asia*, and *Asia*, as he imagined, he had found. His touching on *America* was far more *accidental* than that of Biarni Heriulfson, inasmuch as the latter did go in search of a distinct though strange western continent. It may be correctly said to have been by *mere accident* that *America* lay in Colon's way. He could not help touching upon it. *But, supposing America had not lain there, where would the present fame of Colon have been?* Yet his merit would have been as great. He would have framed a theory, but that theory would have proved erroneous; *it was erroneous*: he would have made an enterprising and bold effort, but that effort would have been recorded to have failed; *it did fail*: he would have sought *Asia*, — *and never found it*; — and such was actually what he did. *He never had any, the slightest, idea of the existence of another land, continent, or tract of country between Europe and Asia; and when, in seeking Asia, he did find that land, he still mistook it for Asia, and died in the belief that it was Asia.* There is no wish to detract from Colon's merit. It was great. His was an enterprising and determined mind. What he did as a bold navigator, in daring to cross an ocean which none but the Northmen had dared to cross before, was much; but it is necessary, and it is right, to place his achievements on their proper footing. As a man of noble, enterprising mind, indomitable perseverance, and great skill in navigation, he can never sink in the

---

\* Irving's Columbus, abr. p. 353.

world's estimation; *but he was not the discoverer of America* in any sense of the term. *He did not explore the American continent.* He never *claimed* to have discovered another or an unknown continent; he never *believed* that he had discovered another continent. *A man can certainly never justly be said to have discovered that of the actuality of whose existence he has not the slightest idea.* It may happen that a man, in pursuing one thing, even an error, may light upon some other thing, a great truth; that he may *perceive* that it is a truth, and follow it out. Then is all the glory of discovery due to him. But Colon never knew, any more than Ptolemy or Pomponius Mela, or any other of the ancients, that there existed any other continent or region besides Europe, Asia, and Africa. Colon's whole theories were founded upon error; in that error he made his expedition; accident led him to something else, of the actual mode of whose existence, extent, and nature, he was totally unaware, and which he did not thoroughly examine; he erred in imagining it to be something else, and he died in the belief that that error was truth. Can he, then, justly be called the discoverer of America? — as compared, be it understood, with the discoveries of, and knowledge possessed by, the Northmen, for that is the point which is being here discussed. The alchemists, who sought the philosopher's stone, hit, in the course of their investigations and experiments, upon many things valuable and useful. Their perseverance and labors, which are almost incredible, claim our honor and respect; but of their actual discoveries they were mostly ignorant; or, if they knew of their existence, they imagined them to be something else, sometimes even the much-longed-for *elixir vite*. The honor of being the fathers of chemistry is not assigned to them, although their experiments and accidental discoveries have *led to* some of the proudest achievements of chemistry in the present day. *Colon stands in precisely the same position as these alchemists.*

What, now, let it be examined, were the ideas and knowledge of the *Northmen* respecting the nature, extent, and situation of the western hemisphere which they had discovered? By collating different accounts we may arrive at a correct view of their ideas and knowledge upon this subject. We must take all the incidental allusions which are any where made, and also such geographical notices as occur, and compare the whole together.

We find it stated that, "from *Stadt*, the most western point of Norway, to *Horn*, (*Eystra Horn*,) the nearest point of Iceland, was

*seven days' sailing*,"\* to the ancient Northmen; that from Snefellsness, in Iceland, which is the nearest point to Greenland, it is *four days' sailing* to the nearest habitable tract of Greenland.† This we may presume to have been on the eastern coast, southwest from Iceland, at some distance from Eastbygd, and near to where Eirek the Red first landed. (See, ante, p. 61.) We are further informed that it took *six men, in a six-oared boat, twenty-one days to row (not sail) from Eastbygd to the present isle of Disco*,‡ in 70° north latitude. It has been already seen that the coasts of North America, in Greenland, were explored as far Kingiktorsoak, near 73° north latitude, and much farther. (See, ante, p. 64 and 309.) Thus this extensive region of the western hemisphere, comprising a continent of much greater extent than all, taken together, that was ever explored by Colon, was accurately explored and known by the Northmen, and its relative position with respect to Europe was also well known. (See, also, careful descriptions of the country noticed, ante, p. 295.) To go no further than this, then, it is already clear that the Northmen had a more correct idea and knowledge of the western hemisphere, of the American continent, its extent, and actual position and nature, than Colon. But we can go much farther. Let the distance between Norway and Iceland, and the number of days' sailing of that distance, be remembered, and compared with the accounts we have of the number of days' sailing between different parts of the American continent. Thence we may learn, even without reference to the other particulars stated in the narrative, (ante, p. 71, &c.) which serve distinctly to identify the land, to how great an extent the continent south of Greenland was known to the Northmen. We find it stated that, between Greenland and Helluland, [Newfoundland,] that is, across Baffin's Bay, it is, *with very strong winds*, four days' sailing, (ante, pp. 73 and 74, and cf. 92 and 93;) between Helluland, that island having been coasted round, (see p. 73) and Markland [Nova Scotia] with fair wind, three days' sailing, (pp. 73 and 98,) between Markland and Vinland, two days' sailing, (pp. 73 and 98.) It is expressly stated in one account, that, between Greenland and the part of the continent in which Vinland lies, is situated the bay called Ginnungagap,§ which of course corresponds to Baffin's Bay. The Northmen, then, eight centuries and

---

\* See "Descript. Grœn. Ivare Bardi filio auctore." Antiq. Am. p. 302.

† Idem, and see note *a* to same page.

‡ See "Grœn. Vet. Chorog." Antiq. Am. p. 299, &c.

§ Gripla, Antiq. Am. p. 296.

a half ago, five centuries before the time of Colon, coasted the American shore, *south* of Newfoundland, to the distance of at least six hundred miles. (See, ante, p. 84; and cf. above, distance and time of sailing between Norway and Iceland.)

How clear and accurate an idea was possessed by the Northmen of the extent of the continent as far south as Cape Cod will thus be very evident; and we find no account in which a different situation or relative position is assigned to any of these lands, though Vinland, as the most esteemed, is more often mentioned than any other land. The notices of the *nature* of the lands, contained in the different narratives, show the knowledge possessed of the quality and aspect of the country thus far.

Let us now see what idea and knowledge the Northmen possessed of the extent of country *beyond* Cape Cod, or Vinland. In the first place, — it will be remembered that Thorvald sent out an exploring party in the *spring* of A. D. 1003, which went westward, and south, not returning till the *autumn*, (p. 120, &c.) The explorations of this party must probably have extended to Carolina, if not farther. Their description of the whole coast is accurate. Secondly, — it is evident that a correct idea of the great extent of the country was generally entertained by the Northmen, — probably owing to the reports which had been made at home of the extent of the explorations of this party, — since it is expressly stated of Thorfinn, (p. 181 ante,) that “he conceived there would be a more extensive tract of country the farther south they went.” Thirdly, — Thorfinn was expressly told that, *beyond* the country of the Skrælings, lay another. It may not be amiss to notice here the similarity of the rumors which thus came to the ears of Thorfinn, of the distant empire of Mexico, (see p. 202, and notes to pp. 253 and 285 ante, &c.) to those which came to the ears of Colon concerning the same empire.\* The former certainly as much accord with the fact as the latter. Each must be simply understood to mean, that there was a land in that neighborhood whose inhabitants were partially civilized. It is curious that we learn from the rumors given to Colon, that the inhabitants rode on horses, which is noticed to have been the case with respect to Biorn in the account of Gudleif Gudlaugson, (ante, p. 277.) Fourthly, — it is stated, in the several places in which Ari Marson is mentioned, [Landnamabok, &c.] that “Huitramannaland lies in

---

\* Irving's Columbus, abridgment, ch. 37, p. 285: large edition, book xv. chaps. ii. and iv.

the western ocean, *beyond* Vinland the Good, west from Ireland," (ante, p. 259;) and that, "to the south of habitable Greenland lie wild tracts; \* the country of the Skrælings beyond these; Markland beyond this; and Vinland beyond the latter. *Next to this, and something beyond it, lies Hvitramannaland,*" which it is also stated that Northmen had visited, &c. (See, ante, p. 261.) Fifthly, — it has been clearly shown, in the fifth chapter of this work, that the Northmen must have made several voyages to the southern coasts of North America, even across the broad Atlantic, and that the region upon which Gudleif Gudlaugson touched, [*Biørnsland,*] is clearly and indisputably to be identified with South Carolina and Georgia. (See pp. 280, 281, and 282.) Sixthly, — the inspection of the geographical works of the Icelanders renders it clear that the idea was common among them that the western continent *extended south from Vinland, as far as Africa; as also that there existed habitable land, as extensive as Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the southern hemisphere.* These ideas could only have been gained from the extent to which the Northmen navigators had explored the shores of this western continent; aided, perhaps, as to the latter idea, by some kind of analogy which it was imagined must exist between the northern and southern hemispheres.

It has thus been proved that the Northmen had a correct idea of the existence, extent, and relative position, with respect to Europe, of the *whole* of the Western, or American continent, [*North America;*] and also that they had a correct idea of the *nature* of that continent. (See, ante, p. 289.) It is not denied that their knowledge of Greenland, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Vinland, was more accurate, as to climate and productions, than their knowledge of the more southern regions; but still they did possess a distinct knowledge of the south, and of the aspect of the country in those regions. Thus, then, they were, beyond a doubt, infinitely more correct in their ideas as to the existence, nature, and extent of the western hemisphere, than was Colon.

But, it may be asked, did not the Northmen, like Colon, consider these lands as portions of Asia? To this it may be answered, that, even if they had so considered them, their knowledge of the land was much more exact than his; but it is happily able to be positively answered, that they never entertained such an idea at all. It has been seen that they explored Greenland, westward, to the

---

\* See note to p. 164, ante.

extreme north, and thus discovered that it could have no connection with Asia. In addition to this, however, there exist ancient Icelandic manuscripts, of a date long anterior to the time of Colon, in which the different quarters of the globe are described and localized. In these we find the western continent mentioned, and also correctly localized. In order that this may be rendered thoroughly clear, one of these works, the existing manuscript of which is of the actual date of the thirteenth century, shall be here translated. In order to render the matter clearer, the author has also carefully prepared a chart (post, p. 359,) of the world, according to the geographical positions laid down in this manuscript; a few additions being made from reference to other manuscripts, either as ancient, or more so. In this chart all the names are given in the Icelandic language, but the translation of them will be found upon reference to the following translation of the ancient manuscript whence the chart is formed. It is particularly worthy of observation, that, on the very manuscript which contains this geographical description, is depicted a rude chart of the world, in which the southern hemisphere is expressly marked as containing a "habitable tract," almost equal in size to Europe, Asia, and Africa. *This idea has, it need hardly be said, been since remarkably confirmed in the discovery of South America, Australia, and Polynesia.* It probably originated, as before noticed, in the extent of country which the explorations of the Northmen had opened to them in the south.

It must be remarked that the ancient Icelandic geographers seem to have entertained exaggerated notions of the extent of Asia eastward, in comparison with what we *now* call Europe. They speak of three Indias, of Babylon, of Asia Minor, &c. as being in Asia. It was thus that, although they included their discoveries in the western ocean within Europe, they did not esteem it out of proportion to Asia. It is obvious that the fact of their including those discoveries in the name of Europe, affects, in no way, the correctness of their idea of the situation of those lands, which is, indeed, in that very manuscript, clearly identified with their actual position. The Icelanders themselves coming from Europe, and being closely connected with it, and it having been, from the remotest antiquity, the habit of geographers to speak of the world as divided into three parts,—Europe, Asia, and Africa,—it may be said to have been almost *necessary* that they should include those western lands in the description of Europe. The bold but correct idea which they *originated*, of the existence of habitable lands in the

southern hemisphere, was obviously that of a tract distinct from any of these three parts of the northern hemisphere. Such tract could not, therefore, be included in any of them.

The chart will serve more clearly to show how it was not unnatural for them, having no distinct idea of the actual extent of Africa, to imagine that the western continent might be connected with that region.

As to the uninhabitable tracts supposed by them, as will be seen, to lie between the extreme north of Russia and Greenland, it may be observed that this idea has been entertained by many comparatively modern geographers. The existence of Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen seemed to warrant the conclusion; and how far north the "uninhabitable tracts" of Greenland do actually extend, has never yet been shown. There is nothing, therefore, absurd or irrational in the idea thus entertained.

The following is the translation of the original manuscript:\*

"The earth † is usually considered as divided into three parts. Of these, one is called ASIA, and extends from northeast to southwest, and occupies the middle region of the earth. In the eastern part lie three different regions, called *Indialand*, [India.] In the farthest India, the apostle Bartholomew preached, and there, also, he gave up his life for Christ's sake. In the nearest India the apostle Thomas preached, and in the middle India he died for the same cause. In Asia is the city of *Ninive*, the greatest of all cities. It is three days' journey in length, and one day's journey in breadth. There is also the city of *Babilon*, [Babylon,] ancient and extensive: there formerly reigned king Nabugudunusor, [Nebuchadnezzar;] but now is that city so completely destroyed, that it is altogether uninhabitable by man, on account of serpents and all manner of noxious animals. In Asia is *Jerusalem*, and also *Antiochia*. In this last city the apostle Peter founded an Episcopal seat; and there he, the first of any man, chaunted mass. *Asia en Minni* [Asia Minor] is a region of great Asia. There the apostle John preached, and there also, in the city of *Effesus*, exists his sepulchre. It is said that four rivers flow out of *Paradise*. One is called *Phison*, or Ganges. This empties itself into the ocean which surrounds the world. Phison rises near a mountain called *Orcobares*. The second river flowing out of Paradise is called *Tigris*,

---

\* A facsimile of the whole of this document is engraved in the *Antiq. Am.*

† See "*Totius orbis brevia descriptio*," *Antiq. Am.* p. 283.

and the third *Eufrates*: both these empty themselves into *Midjardarhaf* [Mediterranean Sea] near Antioch. The *Nilus*, [Nile,] otherwise called Geon, is the fourth river which flows out of Paradise. It divides Asia from Affrica, and flows through the whole of *Egiptaland*, [Egypt.] In *Egiptaland* is *Babilon in Nyja*, [Cairo,] and the city called Alexandria.

“The second part of the earth is called *AFFRICA*, which extends from southwest to west and *northwest*; [this form being given to it under the supposition of its extending to, and joining, the western continent.] There are *Serkland*, [land of the Saracens, being Morocco, &c.] and three regions called *Blaland*, [land of black men or negroes.] *Midjardarhaf* [the Mediterranean Sea] divides Affrica from Europa.

“*EUROPA* is the third part of the earth, extending from west and northwest to the northeast, [such being its extent and form, including the western continent of North America within it.] In the east of Europe is *Gardavellid*, [Russia.] There are *Holmgard* and *Pallteskia* and *Smalenskia*. To the south of *Gardavellid* lies *Grikjakonungs vellid*, [empire of the Greek kings; that is, the eastern Roman empire, which was then in existence, Constantinople not having been taken by the Turks till A. D. 1453.] Of this kingdom, the principal city is Constantinopolis, which our countrymen call *Miklagard*. In *Miklagard* is a church, which the inhabitants call *Agiosophia*; but the Northmen call it *Ægisif*. This church exceeds all other churches in the world, both in structure and size. *Bolgaraland* [Bulgaria] and a great number of islands, called *Griklands Eyjar*, belong to the empire of the Greeks. *Krit* [Crete] and *Kipr* [Cyprus] are the most celebrated of the Grecian islands. *Sikiley* [Sicily] is a great kingdom in that part of the world called Europa. *Italia* is a kingdom to the south of a great ridge of mountains called by us *Mundia*, [Alps.] In the furthest part of Italy, is Apulia, called by the Northmen *Pulslund*. In the middle of Italy stands *Romaborg* [Rome.] To the north of Italy is *Langobardia*, which we call *Langbardaland*. To the north of the mountains, towards the east, is *Saxland* [Germany,] and to the southwest, *Fracland* [France.] *Hyspania*, which we call *Spanland*, [Spain,] is a great kingdom which extends south, to the Mediterranean, between *Langbardaland* and *Fracland*. *Rin* [Rhine] is a great river which flows to the north from *Mundia*, between *Saxland* and *Fracland*. Near the mouths of the Rhine lies *Frisland*, northwards from the sea. To the north of *Saxland* is *Danmork*, [Denmark.] The



ocean is poured into *Austrveg* [the Baltic Sea] near Danmork. *Svithjod* [Sweden] lies to the east of Danmork; *Noreg* [Norway] to the north. To the north of Noreg is Finnmark. Thence the shore bends towards the northeast, and thence to the east, till it reaches *Bjarmaland*, [Permia,] which is subject to the kings of Garda. From Bjarmaland uninhabitable tracts [lönd obygd] extend towards the north, until they even reach so far as Greenland. Beyond Greenland, towards the south, lies Helluland; beyond that, Markland; beyond that *it is not far* to Vinland, *er sumir menn atla at gangi af Affrica* [which some men think to be extended even from Africa.]\* England and Scotland are one island; but each of them is a separate kingdom. Ireland is a great island; Iceland is also a great island, to the north of Ireland. All these regions lie in that part of the world which is called Europe."

It will thus appear very clearly that no connection was in the slightest degree conceived by the Northmen to exist between Asia and the western continent. Asia extended from northeast to southwest; Africa from southwest to west and northwest, — thus extending, according to their idea, farther out, northward and westward, into the Atlantic than it actually does, and so joining the western continent; — and Europe from west and northwest, — that is, from the western continent, — to northeast, where it joined Asia. The tract of Greenland was considered as connected with Europe *proper* by extensive uninhabitable tracts to the extreme north. Helluland, Markland, and Vinland extended southwards below Greenland. There was, then, nothing unnatural, knowing as they did the great extent of the region of which Vinland formed a part, in supposing that it might be connected with Africa.

It can no longer be a matter of the slightest doubt, which party had the most accurate idea of the existence, nature, extent, and position of the western continent, — Colon, or the Northmen. It has been already proved that, as to the merit, and honor, and enterprise, attending the *act* and *mode* of discovery, the Northmen stand far before Colon.

Can it then any longer remain matter of doubt that, contemplated in every aspect and mode, the true honor of the discovery of America, of the Western Hemisphere, belongs to the Northmen, and to the Northmen alone? that to them is due a far higher honor and a far

---

\* This is one of the passages quoted by Mr. Bancroft to prove that Vinland is in Africa! All the other passages quoted by him are in exactly the same words, in this part, as this one!

greater share of merit than to Colon? The merit of Colon was great, in daring to cross an ocean which none *in his country* had crossed; and none admires him, for his daring enterprise, more than the author of this work; but let him take his fair place in the niche of fame: let him not be elevated to the place which does not, in any way, really belong to him: let him not usurp the honors due to others. He was *not* the discoverer of America: he was *not* the first visitant to her shores: his act was *not* so perilous, or complete, or adventurous a one as the oft-repeated acts of the Northmen; nor was his actual knowledge of the country in any degree so exact, while all his ideas concerning it were purely erroneous. The Northmen crossed the broad Atlantic, without any of his advantages, five centuries before him. They discovered, and explored, and dwelt upon, the continent of North America eight centuries and a half ago. They founded important colonies in the northern parts, (in Greenland,) and were well acquainted with the more southern regions, where also, if they did not found colonies, they at any rate dwelt for several years. The regions with which they were best acquainted, south of Greenland,\* were the regions which have since assumed the most important rank of all the regions of the western continent. Shall the Northmen be deprived, then, of the well-deserved meed of honor and glory which is so justly due to them, for their bold and enterprising achievements, for their often-repeated explorations, and for their early but accurate knowledge of these distant regions?

---

\* Notice must be here taken of what may seem some inconsistency in one part of the previous pages. On p. 4, *Biarni Heriulfson* is spoken of as the *discoverer of America*, while in every subsequent page (see 8, 65, 151, 230, &c. &c.) he is shown to have been, and spoken of as, the discoverer only of *those parts of America south of Greenland*. The inadvertent want of exact precision in this place arose from the regions of New England, and of the scenes of *Biarni, Loif, Thorvald, and Thorfinn's* explorations being had in immediate reference. It would have been proper to name *Eirik the Red* as the discoverer of *America*, and *Biarni Heriulfson* as the discoverer of the *regions of America south of Greenland*, — which latter are now by far the most important. In the heading to the second chapter, the same inadvertency took place. It is corrected in the "Table of Contents" to that chapter.

CHART OF THE WORLD, ACCORDING TO ICELANDIC MSS. OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

E U R O P A		A S I A
<p>Grenland [Lönd obyd.] Bjarmaland</p> <p>Gimungagap Fimmork</p> <p>Helluland Noregr Seithjod</p> <p>Markland Austreve Gardavelli</p> <p>Vinland Frisland Danmark</p> <p>Huitraman- Spanland Saxland</p> <p>naland Mundia Grilja-</p> <p>Biorrsland Sikiley Italia konungs-</p> <p>[Sumir menn Midjardarhaf Krit &amp;c.</p> <p>aela at gångei Serkland Egiptaland</p> <p>af Africa.] Blalann</p>		<p>Paradise</p> <p>Ninive (2) Indialand</p> <p>Babilon (3) Indialand</p> <p>Antiochia</p> <p>Jernusalem</p> <p>Asia en Minni</p> <p>Nilus</p>
A F F R I C A		B Y G D
S Y N N R I		



## NOTE B.\*

### ON THE TRADITIONAL RECORDS OF THE NORTHERN NATIONS.

SINCE those who have paid little attention to the subject of the antiquities of the Northern races, may be unaware of the extent of historical tradition among them, it may be well to add a few remarks on that subject in this place. The Northern nations are rich in ancient historical literature, which is able to be clearly proved, by its internal evidence, to be remarkable for accuracy and truth in the main details. This historical literature owes its existence to the profession, as it may properly be termed, of *Scalds* and *Saga-men* which existed among them, and was always held in peculiar honor, and esteemed of a sacred importance. In illustration of this subject, it may not be amiss to quote some of the remarks of one who has studied the antiquities of Iceland and the north with care and attention, and whose remarks are made without the slightest reference to the subject of this volume. The following passages occur in *Wheaton's* "History of the Northmen," in the two chapters on Icelandic literature. "The Icelanders cherished and cultivated the language and literature of their ancestors with remarkable success. \* \* \* In Iceland an independent literature grew up, flourished, and was brought to a certain degree of perfection, before the revival of learning in the south of Europe. This island was not converted to Christianity until the end of the tenth century, when the national literature, which still remained in *oral tradition*, was full-blown, and ready to be committed to a written form, (p. 49.) \* \* \* Like those of most other barbarous nations, the Scandinavian learning and history were, as has already been remarked, *preserved in oral tradition* long before any attempt was made to reduce them to writing, (p. 50.) \* \* \* The Scalds were at once

---

\* See, ante, pp. 22, 81, 118, &c. &c.

poets and historians. \* \* \* A regular succession of this order of men was perpetuated, and a list of two hundred and thirty in number, of those who were most distinguished in the three northern kingdoms, from the reign of Ragnar Lodbrok to Valdemar II, is still preserved in the Icelandic language, (p. 51.) \* \* \* The ancient literature of the North was not confined to the poetical art. The Scalds recited the praises of kings and heroes in verse, whilst the *Saga-men* recalled the memory of the past in prose narratives. \* \* \* The memory of past transactions was thus handed down from age to age in an unbroken chain of tradition, and the ancient songs and Sagas were preserved until the introduction of book-writing gave them a fixed and durable record, (p. 57.) \* \* \* The recitations were embellished with poetical extracts from the works of different Scalds. Story and song were thus united together, *and the memory was strengthened* by this *constant cultivation*, so as to be the *safe depository* of the national history and poetry. \* \* \* The power of oral tradition, in thus transmitting, through a succession of ages, poetical or prose compositions of considerable length, may appear almost incredible to civilized nations, accustomed to the art of writing. But it is well known, that, even after the Homeric poems had been reduced to writing, the rhapsodists who had been accustomed to recite them, could readily repeat any passage desired. And we have, in our own times, among the Calmucks, [Persians, &c. &c.] examples of heroic and popular poems [and narratives] of great length, thus preserved and handed down to posterity. This is more especially the case where [as in Iceland and the Northern nations] there is a perpetual order of men, whose *exclusive employment* it is to learn and repeat, whose faculty of the memory is thus improved and carried to the highest pitch of perfection, and who are *relied upon*, as historiographers, to preserve the national annals. The interesting scene, presented to this day in every Icelandic family, in the long nights of winter, is a living proof of the existence of this ancient custom. No sooner does the day close, than the whole family \* \* \* [being assembled,] one of the family takes his seat near the lamp, and begins to read some favorite Saga. \* \* \* In some families the Sagas are *recited by those who have committed them to memory*, and there are still instances of itinerant orators of this sort, who gain a livelihood during the winter, by going about, from house to house, repeating the stories they have thus learnt by heart. About two centuries and a half after the first settlement of Iceland by the Norwegians, [that is, about A. D. 1100,] the learned

men of that remote island began to collect and reduce to writing these traditional poems and histories, (p. 59.)” This was near the period which all evidence points out as having been the date of the manuscripts, the originals, or copies of the originals of which we possess, as to the expeditions of the Northmen to the continent of North America. Of the same date, or later, are all the authentic ancient histories of these northern kingdoms.

The same author says, in another place, (p. 94,) “Some of the ancient Sagas which now exist in the Icelandic language, remained for a long period in oral tradition, before they were reduced to writing; —” and, again, “One general remark, made by a learned and ingenious writer who comes fresh from reading these works, is applicable to them all,—that the ancient poetry and romance of the north deals *more in reality, and less in fiction*, than that of the south. He explains this by the well-known fact, that the history of the middle ages of the south of Europe was written exclusively by the clergy; and the lay poets, having only the field of fiction left to them, could distinguish themselves in no other way, than by giving a higher coloring to the marvellous stories they found in the monkish chronicles. In the north, on the contrary, the Scalds, who were attached to the courts of kings, and to the most distinguished families of the country, were the sole depositories of its historical traditions, which it was their *interest, as well as glory, faithfully to preserve.*” Remarks to the same effect might be quoted from the pages of every author who has written on northern history and literature, though without the remotest allusion to the discovery of the Western Hemisphere. No point, indeed, can be more clearly established, than the credibility of the ancient traditions, as committed to writing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The great historian of the north, Snorri Sturluson, declares, in the preface to his valuable *Heimskringla*, that it is a history compiled “*from the traditions of wise men,*” &c. It has been seen (ante, pp. 118, 197, 206, &c.) that, in the documents discussed in this volume, allusions are often made to traditions.

We find, in every one of the documents translated in this volume, that sure sign of remote antiquity to be present,—the intermixture of scraps of poetry with the prose. The existence of this is well known to indicate the great antiquity of the document in which it is contained.

It will be remembered that Cæsar, in his *Commentaries*, speaking of the Druids in Britain, alludes expressly to the great num-

ber of verses, which it was unlawful to commit to writing, but which the Britons, even in his time, committed to memory. Some pupils required twenty years fully to acquire the whole. (See *Casar, de Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. § xiii.)

A moment's consideration will render it sufficiently obvious, that, if, at the present day, the physician can keep constantly in mind, and record, the nature and qualities of that intricate structure which occupies his study,—can remember, so as to be apt for every occasion, the nature and qualities of infinite diseases; if the lawyer can remember all “his quiddits, his quillits, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks;” if even the merchant can retain constantly ready in his mind for application, all the various items of information necessary for his business;—there can be nothing extraordinary in the fact of those, whose whole, and especial, and particular, and *sacred* office it was, anciently, to record historical events, remembering, and handing down correctly, the brief records of those events. The records contained in this volume, are, as must have been perceived by the perusal of them, precisely of that condensed, extremely brief character, which was to be expected in oral traditions. There is every thing in their mere style, language, and manner, which marks them as the faithful written records of simple, unadorned, *accurate*, oral traditions. There is very little adornment; brief simplicity is their chief characteristic. They were precisely the *kind of traditions* which were likely to be recorded, and eagerly listened to, relating, as they did, to the first discovery, and to the adventures of the first discoverers, of the land in which the listeners dwelt, or of the lands situated beyond it, with which they had commercial or other intercourse and connection.





COMPTON TELETYPE  
UNIT

345960

HAM  
S6537n

Author Smith, Joshua Toulmin

Title The Northmen in New England.

195  
**University of Toronto  
Library**

**DO NOT  
REMOVE  
THE  
CARD  
FROM  
THIS  
POCKET**

Acme Library Card Pocket  
LOWE-MARTIN CO. LIMITED

